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TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.



NEW-YEARS' Days are the milestones on the journey of life. What a weary journey it would be without those milestones! The traveller over the waste of time would be like a mariner on a trackless sea without rudder or compass—a castaway! Just imagine mankind without a calendar—seasons following seasons, and years gliding into years without a resting-place from which to look back upon the past, and forward into the future. I do not know how we can realize this except upon some desert journey, where there are no landmarks to tell us how far we have travelled, and how many weary miles yet lie beyond. He who has travelled such

a road can tell how long the miles appear, how heavily the time hangs; how weary become the feet! As you trudge onward, seeing nothing to give you assurance that you are nearing the goal, your heart sinks for want of hope. You do not know how far you have come; you cannot guess how far you have yet to go. Oh! for a stone or post to tell you that you have accomplished some definite portion of your journey, if it be only one single mile; for then you know the extent of your toil. At such landmarks you sit you down, as on an oasis, and bathe your wayworn feet, and dry your tears, and rise refreshed and strengthened for the next stage on your journey. How infinite is the mercy of Heaven in adapting times and seasons to man's estate and condition! Let us suppose a sudden change, and that the earth occupied two years in revolving round the sun—that the four seasons were doubled in length. How the tedium of opening spring would provoke us! how the glory of summer would pall upon us! how the lingering promise of autumn would make the heart sick! and how terrible would be the dread of the coming winter! But to realize this more forcibly, let us imagine a day of forty-eight hours—twenty-four hours of day, and the same number of night. As it is, many of us talk of killing Time. But in such a case, would not all mankind be in league to put an end to him once and for ever? So intolerable does the bare idea of such an arrangement appear, that the order of things in the inhabited regions near the poles may almost be regarded as a defect in the Great Scheme. These regions are apt to give us the idea of out-houses attached to the Great Building which were never intended to be inhabited except by reindeer and bears. Tell a fashionable cockney of a place where they never draw down the blinds and light the lamps for five months and he will faint. Perhaps the seven months when the blinds are permanently drawn down, and the lamps are always burning, would suit him better; but he would get tired even of that. The fool's

paradise of eternal night-revels would be a pandemonium. Nature has set us an example in the ordering of seasons, and the marking of time, which we have followed in our own small way by instituting minor subdivisions. It may be said, God made years and days, and man made hours and minutes and seconds. It is well that the plan has been thus artificially extended, for we stand in need of the most frequent reminders of the flight of time. Without these bells of warning, clashing for ever around us, the sands of life would steal away like a thief, robbing us of many wholesome seasons of thought and sober reflection. But we take small note of these minor warnings. *Carpe diem* is a maxim little heeded. A miserly maxim. As if a day were of any account! A youth with many years in store for him throws away a day as a rich man throws away a guinea. 'There are plenty more. The sun will rise to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, and my purse will fill with days as fast as it is emptied.' Weeks! what do they mark but a brief period in our course of toil or pleasure? Months! Do we not sometimes forget whether it is August or September? Years! But here we pause. Days, weeks, months, may preach to us in vain, but years will make us hold and listen—especially when we have turned thirty. Before that age most young men are proud of the fact that they are growing older. They hear their seniors prate of their age and experience, and they envy age and experience as, at another period of their existence, they envied whiskers and tail-coats. But when thirty years are passed, and the figures are rapidly leading on to twoscore, a man becomes as unwilling—ay, as unwilling as any woman—to confess that he is as old as he really is. He would like to be thought younger—he would like to be younger.

This is about the time of life when men begin to exclaim

'Eheu fugaces anni labentur!'

It has been but a line from Horace hitherto, something to scan, some-

thing to quote to show off your Latin. But now it is a stern, inexorable voice, challenging you on the threshold of a new year. You have serious thoughts now; you are wise now—now that half of your three score is gone. Why were you not serious, why were you not wise before, when you were one-and-twenty, entering upon manhood and life, ten years ago? 'Fool, fool, fool! If I had had such thoughts then as I have now, what might I not have accomplished ere this?' Well, it is no use biting your lips, and stamping your foot. It is a true and wholesome proverb which says you cannot put an old head upon young shoulders. There is no fitness in the thing: man must have time to develop his head, as a cabbage must have time to develop its heart. I for one do not believe in William Pitt, prime minister at twenty-three. He might have been as learned as Bacon, but what could he have known of the philosophy of life? How could he have known that which he never saw? Solomon was not wise because he read books.

According to my experience of life derived from observation, and the perusal with the keenest interest of many biographies, 'thirty' is the golden number in the years of a man's life. This is the middle milestone upon which he rests to survey the past and contemplate the future. Woe to him who does not rest and think now! for at this time the mind is more candid and the heart more open to the touch of truth and tenderness than it ever will be again, until, perhaps, the day when there is no hope left. If you look around in your society, and mark the men who have passed the Rubicon of forty-five or fifty, still retaining health and strength, you will find that the *fugaces anni* trouble them little. Men at this age think less of death than youths of half their years. They seem to look upon the midway of their age as the crisis of a disease, and that when they have passed this bridge they have got over the worst. I remember, when I first began to think seriously of the fleeting years, asking a boisterous old gentleman if

the thought of his narrowing span ever troubled him. I can recall our brief colloquy word for word.

'Ever trouble me! not in the least; not half so much as when I was your age.'

'But,' I said, 'does it never occur to you that your time is getting very short, and that you must go some day soon?'

'Not at all,' he said; 'I am strong and hearty, and I feel to have just as good a prospect of life as ever I had. When I was twenty I thought I should die before I came of age. Now I am sixty-three, I see no reason why I shouldn't live to be a hundred.'

I know my friend well, and I am not going to hold him up as an awful example, for that would be to mistake his case altogether. He is not a man hardened in sin, but a man hardened in years. He has got used to living, and thinks he will live on indefinitely just the same, as a man used to wealth thinks he will always have turtle and champagne for dinner. I don't say that this is not a comfortable state of feeling to arrive at, so as you carry with you a pure heart and a clear conscience; but I think you miss the lesson which chasteneth a man to most profit, and teacheth him most fully the philosophy of life, if you escape over the bridge of mid-life without passing through the valley of the shadow of serious thoughts.

Age does not alone blanch the hair and wrinkle the cheek. I will not say it hardens the heart, but it dulls the feelings and blunts the sensibilities. Neither very young nor very old people feel the loss of friends so keenly as do persons of middle age. The young are too buoyant of spirit to be deeply touched by grief: the old have stood by many graves. At thirty you feel the loss of friends and companions keenly. You set out with them on the journey, full of strength, and life, and hope; and now they have fallen by the wayside, one by one,—those you loved best perhaps—and you are alone with strangers. There was a time when you could not have imagined life tolerable without those friends of your heart;

but what have you done when they sank beside you on the road, but paused for a moment, and said, 'Poor fellow!' dropping a single tear, and passing on. There is a bitter but profitable reflection in this. A man of great mark, much esteemed, and held in high regard by the circle in which he moves, sinks into an untimely grave. Just for the moment there is a hush among those who knew him; a few tears are shed, a few grave looks are interchanged; but to-morrow brings dry eyes and cheerful faces, and his friends eat and drink and make merry before the week is out. The persons who do this are not more heartless than the rest of their kind. It is a failing common to humanity. It is hard to grieve enough. Often and often I have caught myself laughing and making merry when I felt that I had yet a heavy debt of tears to pay to a dead friend. So it will be with you. You will die, and the friends who now 'grapple you to their souls with hooks of steel' will be gay of heart with the next sun. There are some who ridicule the conventional ensigns of grief, 'the trappings and the suits of woe.' They are wrong. It is the only way in which poor weak humanity can give permanence to its sorrow. Let us show it on our hats, if we cannot in our hearts, that we are grieving for a friend. Let crape redeem our cold stint of tears. I hold that the least we can do for a friend when he is dead is to pay all honour to his remains. When he is alive, do we not set our house in order to receive him; do we not place the choicest viands before him, and allot him our best room? Does he need all the superfluities which we press upon him? No. But we are lavish in our attentions that we may show him respect. And shall we have no further regard for him when the spirit has fled, and his clay—that clay which we honoured so much in the warmth of life—has grown cold? Away with your hard shopkeeping maxims! Leave me to pillow the head of my dead friend upon the softest satin, and furnish his last house with becoming state. It is the last service

I can render him. I cannot pay him all the debt of grief I owe him. Let me wring my purse-strings if I cannot wring my heart-strings.

I am reminded of Queen Elizabeth's injunctions to the discursive preacher at Paul's Cross. 'To your text, Mr. Dean—to your text!'

Well, my text is 'Turning over a new leaf,' and I am coming to the point in my own way. This night when the last days of the year are ebbing away, a fair hand playing with my dark locks has discovered a gray hair—the first gray hair! I had never seen such a thing—never dreamt of such a thing! At my age: I could not believe it.

It was laid upon a band of black velvet and placed before me.

I can resist conviction no longer. There it lies, blanched and white—white as the driven snow! And it is *my* hair. It seems but yesterday that I was at school, wishing I were a man. And now to-day I am gray, and growing old. What have I done in all this time? Have I fulfilled a man's mission upon earth—have I made any step towards it? Have I done any good in the most infinitesimal degree, for which the world is wiser or better? I cannot answer my own questions. I am dumb, and sitting here contemplating that white hair, with the sense that another year is gliding away, I feel that it is time in right good earnest to turn over a new leaf. I have made the resolution often before, but never under the sense of obligation which now weighs upon me. I remember a certain 'Hogmanay' night, ten years ago, when half a dozen young fellows sat round a certain hospitable fire, which has, alas! been quenched. We were not, any of us, in good heart, and we resolved with the new year to turn over a new leaf. It was a trifling proceeding—little better than sport. When twelve o'clock struck, one laid down his pipe, and said, 'From this moment I give up smoking;' another threw his box into the fire, and said, 'I will snuff no more;' a third said, 'I forswear billiards henceforward;' a fourth resolved to master the German language before that day

twelve months. These were small leaves to turn over; but the result was not unimportant. These vows made in concert, at the midnight hour of the last night of the old year, were kept for twelve months. The smoker and the snuffer relapsed; but the billiard-player broke himself of a passion for play, and was a richer man for it. The aspiring linguist learnt German well enough to read it, and has been a man of more value in his vocation ever since. Would that I could meet all those friends again on the last day of this waning year, that we might resolve anew, and on a broader plan! I would say to them, 'Let us begin the new year with chastened hearts, and with a resolve to shape all our actions by the rule of Christian charity; let us measure all we do by the gauge of truth, for then, whatever be the result, we shall have the consolation of knowing that we have striven to walk in the right path.' But, alas! that same company will never meet together on earth again.

It is the fashion with many persons to dance the old year out, as if it were a matter for rejoicing that another period of life is gone. I hold it is no time for dancing nor for mirth. It is a time for thought and serious reflection; a moment to pause and gird up our loins for a fresh start on the journey of life. The time is peculiarly favourable for making new resolutions, and if they are solemnly made by a family, or social circle, by the fireside, as the bells ring out the knell of the old year, they are more likely to be remembered and kept than if they were made at a less impressive moment.

Thirty years ago, a young man

began to feel the burden of a rapidly increasing family. His companions in the race of life pitied him, and prophesied that he would never get on, with so large a family dragging upon him. The young man himself quailed before his responsibility, and almost lost heart, for he had already seven children, and was little more than thirty years of age. But on the last night of a certain year he made a resolution. He said, 'I will do my duty by my children; I will strain every nerve to give them a good education to fit them for making their way in the world.'

For this end he toiled and slaved, and denied himself; and when his friends and associates saw him in rusty clothes, and with careworn looks, plodding on year after year, getting poorer rather than richer, they sighed for his hard lot, through the *curse* of a large family that weighed upon him and crushed him.

That imagined curse became a blessing. That man is now in the sere and yellow leaf, happy, contented, and well provided for by his sons and daughters, who, through the superior education they received, are now occupying positions in life which may almost be termed brilliant. This is no parable.

I have preached my sermon, and have only to add one 'lastly' to my congregation. Don't dance out the old year; don't let it slip away amid mirth and thoughtlessness. Seize the moment to be sober and thoughtful—to make good resolutions for the future. When these are made, with a strong heart, and a firm will, then may we truly wish each other a Happy New Year.

A. H.



SOCIETY ON ITS FEET.



HOULD Mr. Frith ever be in want of a subject for one of his great character pictures, few scenes would afford him more opportunities for the study of the varieties of human expression than an ordinary ball-room. Not being anatomists, we are unable to account for the intimate connection between the muscles of the foot and those of the face; but that an intimate connection does exist few can doubt who ever studied the science of dancing.

Dancing, like painting, has its various schools. First, at least in point of seniority, comes the pre-Raphaelite school, whose followers are generally of more sober years than the ordinary run of dancers. To them aptly may be applied the German epithet of 'foot-painting.' In the same manner as Mr. Millais elaborates a rose-leaf or piece of point-lace, so do they with intense earnestness finish off each individual step of a quadrille. The pre-Raphaelite is, however, seldom met with beyond the confines of a quadrille or Lancer. Sometimes a bolder spirit than his fellows may hazard a polka, but never a waltz or galop. Such delicate machinery is of no avail amid the boisterous waves of a 'sensation' or a 'burlesque.'

The next—and this is a very numerous class—are what may be termed the 'scudders,' who are always ready to dance anything, and rarely think it necessary to say 'they would rather not dance this time.' When invited by the affable and smiling hostess, the scudder, although a graceful is by no means an easy dancer, his long, flowing steps carrying his partner along with marvellous rapidity, which, accompanied by tolerable steering, will often earn for him the reputation, at least among his own intimate circle of friends, of that ubiquitous character, 'the finest waltzer in London.'

A third class let us call the 'staggerers'—the pests of the ball-room. A staggerer can generally be detected: even before commencing a dance there is a peculiar vague and uncertain expression about the eyes—a nervous anxiety about commencing, which never fails to betray him. You see, from the moment of his starting, that he is a doomed man; his unfortunate partner, perhaps unconscious of the fate in store for her, is gazing another way. Could she but see the expression of the staggerer's face, we feel sure she would pause ere taking the fatal step. We will suppose, however, after numerous false starts they are at last off. If, luckily, the corner from which they start happens to be entirely free from dancers, they may, perhaps, survive the first half-dozen steps without a collision; but their good fortune rarely lasts so long—certainly not longer. By a kind of magnetic attraction the staggerer seems to bear down against the first approaching couple, and then commences a series of collisions of more or less disastrous effect; thenceforth personal identity is gone, and he becomes a mere racquet-ball tossed about from one side of the room to the other, until at last he seems to have just sufficient presence of mind left to

lead his bruised and lacerated partner to a sofa, where she may congratulate herself on having at last obtained a haven of rest after the perils she has undergone.

But in addition to these three large divisions there is yet one more, though, we fear, in a smaller proportion—the really good dancer. In him the spirit of dancing is not confined to the mere movement of the feet, but seems to pervade his whole body—not only his toes but every limb seems brought into action. There is a spring and buoyancy in his style which may even excite admiration in the most placid of chaperons. Though an excellent steerer, passing easily through the most intricate passages, he never appears to be on the ‘look out.’ A kind of instinct seems to guide him

through the most complicated mazes; and whether it be the quietest of mazurkas or the fastest of galops, he bears his partner along with equal skill and grace.

In our description of the various classes of dancers we have purposely abstained from including the ladies, who, as a rule, have fewer peculiarities, or, at least, less opportunity of showing them. They may generally be divided into two classes—those who can, and those who cannot dance. With the former, dancing is one of the most fascinating of all amusements. With the latter—but no, let us recall the days of our childhood and copy-books, when we used diligently to write that most amiable of precepts, ‘Comparisons are odious.’



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S DAY IN PARIS.



It was once my lot to spend my Christmas Day in Paris, away from familiar faces, away from familiar places, and that much-loved magnet for our Englishman's eyes and coat-tails—a Christmas coal fire.

None of your wood fires for me—such as were burnt in my white, fluted, china-looking stove, that hiss, sputter, crackle, and sing, but throw out no heat. I have often thought that wood fires and coal fires were admirable examples of the national characteristics of the two peoples. How quickly your wood kindles! How soon he is a flame: in what a state of roar, crackle, fume, and fuss he passes his brief existence; what volumes of smoke he emits; what a buoyant, boisterous, brilliant fellow he is altogether, and how soon he subsides into white ashes! How long coal takes a lighting: how he has to be petted, patted, and coaxed into a flame; but once a-blaze, what a steady, genial, glowing heat he casts around him; and what a long time that heat lasts! I remember little Jack Shattersense used to say the proper way to spell Englishman was *Inglesishman*, and that they were so called from their attachment to the chimney-corner.

But, as I said, there I was in Paris; away from my old, natural Christmas associations of holly, oyster-barrels, white-topped leads of churches, pantomimes, laurels, turkeys, country dances, foxes, mistletoe, snap-dragon, amateur theatricals, Devonshire cream, flirtation, mince-pies, pianos, stables, staircase-conversations, snowballing, and burnt brandy. I sighed as I thought how pleasantly my friends would pass their time—sighed as I thought of those two quaint old gables that I could never remember seeing for the first time; the roof tops familiar to my eyes as my father's face, and the two little ends of white cravat that always stuck out from beneath his chin, or those long-loved cap-strings of my mother's—the strings that, years ago as I went to sleep in her lap, I used to curl round my fingers, and hold as a material guarantee that Hannah of the nursery should not be summoned to carry me away.

So instead of being among my old friends, there I was in a small room, standing on a fleecy, furry rug, near the cheerless stove. My floor had no carpet to cover its shiny, slippery, bright, bees-waxed surface. My sofa, arm-chair, and indeed the furniture generally, was elegant and luxurious, and more fitted for a lady's boudoir than a man's chamber; and there was the ever-present gold pendule on the mantel-piece, which occasionally struck the half-hours as a piece of distinction from the monotony of an existence, that to a French clock must have been distressing in the extreme.

I had only one room, one whole side of which constituted a door, which closed, shut off the bed, and left an entire and perfect sitting-room. I never got over the feeling of wonder at opening the whole side of my room at once with a small handle; it looked as if it were a preliminary effort to walking away secretly with a floor of the house.

CHRISTMAS ON THE BOULEVARDS.

On the morning of Christmas Eve, I turned out of my little room and took a stroll upon the Boulevards, after going through the preparatory ceremony of locking my door, and giving the key to the concierge. I verily believe that Frenchmen invented concierges, and concierges invented houses in flats, for the sole purpose of necessitating the smiles and nods, and small talk, which form the countersigns to the delivery of the key.

'Bonjour, madame, voilà la clef!'

'Merci, monsieur,' as I offered her the key.

'Merci, madame,' as she takes it.

'Il fait un temps superbe, monsieur.'

'Très-beau, madame!'

'Bonjour, monsieur!' as I descend the stairs.

'Bonjour, madame.' I lift my hat—we exchange a smile, the old lady giving infinitely more in the way of propitiation than she takes. I have no doubt, that in speaking of me to the garçon, she says: 'Ce monsieur là est très-aimable!' and not only says it, but thinks it, because I always linger near her window for that delicious interchange of thought and sentiment quoted above. Singular people! If lifting the hat, and saying bonjour, give you a good opinion of me, then will I lift my hat and bonjour continually.

Three minutes' walk brought me to the Boulevards—those wonderful Boulevards that would half convince a stranger that the population of Paris is composed of soldiers, waiters, nurse-girls, and babies. As I walk on the broad asphalté pavement, and look at the shops, and the leafless trees, I sigh as I think of our noble Fleet Street, and our gorgeous Strand, and confess that while Paris is a city, London is a mere agglomeration of houses.

Although the Parisians think but little of Christmas, and reserve the celebration of the season for New Year's Day, still there is a bustle on the Boulevards. The visitor who only knows Paris in the heat of summer, will be surprised to see

that on each side at the edge of the pavement nearest the gutter, small wooden huts are being erected. Mere shells, built of the roughest boards—they spoil the beauty of the Boulevards. Their construction is conducted with great noise and bustle, hammering of nails, shouldering of planks, consultations with the sergent-de-ville, for it is impossible to do anything in Paris without demanding permission of an individual in a cocked-hat.

The erection of these cockle-shells on the Boulevards forms the distinctive difference of Paris at Christmas from any other season of the year. 'What,' asks the inquiring English visitor, as he hears the strife of hammers, and the din of tongues, 'can it be that the town is in a state of siege, and that the Emperor is ordering the erection of these huts for the military; or are they merely temporary accommodation until fresh barracks are built?' and he thinks with fond pride of his own Shorncliffe, Aldershot, and Colchester, and the superior strength of the timber-architecture there.

The builders of the huts—those wood masons, who are very industrious—go at their work with a savage energy for sometimes full five minutes together; then rest for a quarter of an hour or so, and contemplate the product of their toil with pride, and talk, and talk, and talk, and talk. Stimulated to fresh exertion by the flow of conversation, they renew their efforts; more nails are driven, another plank is added. Hourra! and they go to the café and order a choppe of beer, and talk to the garçon, and confer with him as to the general effect of the wood-work on the eye of the casual spectator, and say: 'Eh! Ah! Ouf! Hein!'

These little temporary shops are for the sale and exhibition of the Etrennes; and great is the excitement of the perambulating Parisian population, as indeed it would be at anything—a victory, a defeat, the erection of a new wall, the pulling down of an old house, a *bonne* carrying twins, or a drum-major twirling his staff. Nothing comes

amiss to inveterate sight-seers or flâneurs, from a revolution to a chiffonier.

On Christmas Eve, a yule log is burnt, as with us; and among the humbler class there is a charming and touching observance. When the children are undressed, and have presented their soft, round cheeks to papa and mamma, they place their shoes upon the hearth close to the fire: their prayers said, they once more kiss papa and mamma, and go to bed. During the night, an angel, or a Good Fairy, is presumed to come down the chimney and fill the little shoes with presents, toys, bonbons and macaroons; and sure enough, as they rise in the morning, and run to the fire-side, the tiny shoes are filled with sweetmeats. Great is the children's joy as each bonbon is brought to light; loud is their laughter, and, to foreign ears, extraordinary their proficiency in French, as the smaller ones inquire if the good things were placed there by a fairy or by an angel.

'C'était un ange,' smiles papa.

'C'était maman!' shout the little nasal treble voices.

'Mais, maman, elle est un ange,' says the biggest boy; 'n'est-ce pas, papa?'

And n'est-ce pas, everybody else? for if a mother is not the providence or good fairy of her children, who should be?

While the buche de Noël is burning with proper state and ceremony, a réveillon is held, a thé is prepared, and a family party is given. Monsieur, the husband, is very amiable to his wife's relations; as is madame to her husband's—it is a Christmas party without the preliminary dinner.

Réveillons are held all over Paris, for though the aspect of the streets may contradict us, there are still students in the Quartier Latin—as, despite alterations and improvements, there is still a Quartier Latin. Eugène, Jules, Alphonse, and Hyppolite meet over a 'ponche.' They are somewhat lugubrious and dismal in their jollity, for they have recently taken to stick-up collars, and to what they suppose

to be English manners, and like to preserve an unruffled surface; but at a later, or rather at an earlier hour, natural vivacity breaks through affected phlegm, and they are noisy, jolly, unreasoning, and agreeable.

They have réveillons, too, among the people, for in this variable, political climate, the humbler classes alone are styled the people. Jean-Marie clinks a cup of hot blue wine with Claude, and Jeanne-Marie compares confidences with Claudine; a considerable quantity of tobacco is consumed; hard times deplored; the continual shrug of the shoulders, and the equally continual 'Que voulez-vous?' oft spoken, more blue wine heated, and a provincial song about the smiling land that they have left 'la bas,' with a Ta-ra-lara-lon-ton-taine chorus, sung so noisily, and so effectively, that the black eyes of the women are gemmed with tears; and the men knit their brows, and begin to think upon their wrongs, and how hard it is to work all day for a few sous.

Those who spend the eve of Christmas out of doors, spend it on the Boulevards and in the Passages; but in Paris, though there may be a number of people, there never is a mob. In England, hardly a hundred folks can gather together without the chance of a fight. Here there is always good-humour, forbearance, and the external forms of politeness—these social virtues being all beneath the grim guard of a cocked-hatted sergent-de-ville.

The theatres are crowded on Christmas Eve, and the cafés in the neighbourhood are thronged during the Entr'actes. About half-past eleven, the salles disgorge their audiences, the cafés do a brisker business, and those wonderful beings, the garçons, move about with a more ubiquitous rapidity, 'Du café! du soda! Un grog du vin! un grog du cognac! du vin chaud! groseille! and pallal,' are sounds that meet the ear on every side. As I have spelt pallal phonetically, I may as well inform my reader that it means pale ale, or bitter beer.

It is curious to follow the crowds on Christmas Eve. They go to the

theatres, the concert-rooms, the music-halls, the guinguettes, and the dancing-rooms, and then to hear High Mass.

High Mass at midnight, on the eve of Christmas Day! The Madeleine was so crowded that numbers of people were turned back by the Suisses, and it was difficult to obtain admission at St. Roch. The interior of the church was crowded, and among the female portion of the congregation there was a refreshing absence of costume. The ladies who were seated had evidently come to hear the service, and not to exhibit their toilettes; but their attention must have been sadly disturbed by the continual stream of people, entering, as it would appear, for the sole purpose of looking round, and going out at an opposite door. These ill-mannered folks had no scruple, but pushed and elbowed their way through ranks of earnest and devout spectators. Another thing offensive to my English eyes, was that the *sergents-de-ville* wore their hats. Surely, in a church the policeman might descend to the level of the mere civilian.

But these annoyances faded from my feelings as my eye grew accustomed to the proportions of the edifice, and my ear drank in the service. And as the rich and noble music swelled to the roof, wreathed round the pillars and filled up the vast area, that man would have been indeed cold and unimpressible who had not remembered how grand and solemn was the anniversary there celebrating.

CHRISTMAS DAY

was clear, sparkling, and not cold. I delivered my key to the concierge with my accustomed amiability, took off my hat with my usual grace, and prepared for a long walk. I struck from the Rue Neuve de Luxembourg, on to the Boulevards, and traversed the whole of that wonderful pavement. The Boulevard des Capucines, stony, white, and new, with its promise of a magnificent Jockey Club, and a new Grand Opera House, and its realization of a monster palatial hotel, with

corridors divided into streets, and its postes de service stationed at intervals, where the servants send orders to the kitchens, stables, and bureaux by electric telegraph. The Boulevard des Italiens, with its old Opera House, attainable by the old Passage de l'Opéra, with its many memories of Meyerbeer, Scribe, and the infernal attempt of Orsini, the Boulevards Montmartre, Poissonnière, Bonne Nouvelle, to the famous Porte St. Denis. Past the Porte St. Martin to the Boulevard St. Martin, or the new Boulevard du Prince Eugène, as far as the Barrière du Trône. Back again to the Boulevard du Temple, with its recollections of Marie Antoinette, and Sir Sidney Smith, on by the Boulevard des Filles du Calvaire, and the Boulevard Beaumarchais, where the winged figure that crests the magnificent column of the Bastille shone molten in the clear sun — down the new Boulevard Bourdon, over the Pont d'Austerlitz, by the side of the river into the Quartier Latin; then into the Faubourg St. Germain, back again over the Pont des Arts, and so into the gardens of the Tuileries—a tolerably good walk, in the course of which I met several military schools taking their promenade; the lads talking with a volubility and gesticulation perfectly national, and their masters bringing up the rear. The majority of the shops were closed; and the only sign of external festivity was a troop of boys in the gardens of the Tuileries, playing at 'La Barbe'—a sort of calm compromise between the English games of 'prisoner's-base,' and 'horney.'

Paris observes Christmas Day as it does Sunday. Many of the shops are closed; and the *bonnes* and the soldiers walk about with an air of rest rather than holiday. It is a *Dimanche* that falls in the middle of the week, et voilà tout! That it is Carnival time, you are reminded by the bills of all the places of public amusement, and by the notices, stuck against the doors of the cafés and restaurants that they will keep open all the night on the occasions of the masked ball at the Opera.

At six o'clock, as on other days, Paris turns out to dinner, and although this leaving home to dine at a restaurant may seem to be a strangely undomestic proceeding, it should not be forgotten that families dine together. Monsieur Dupont does not visit the restaurateurs alone. He takes with him Madame Dupont, and his children, Monsieur Auguste, Octave, Maximilien Dupont; and Mademoiselle Victorine, Amélie, Therese Dupont. The grandfather or grandmother of the children is often of the party, and it is very charming to watch the attention of the married Duponts to their elderly relative, their devotion to their offspring, and the admirable behaviour of these last-mentioned little individuals, their quietude of manner, and habitual deference to papa and maman. The whole affair is, in feeling and spirit, as healthily domestic as the excursion of a mechanic—when the husband carries the baby proper, the wife the baby before the last, and the eldest boy the basin tied in a handkerchief that contains the cold meat, and bread and cheese. It is a great error to suppose that Frenchmen are more regardless of home ties than men of other nations—an error which their own novelists and romancers have done their utmost to create and to foster. The prevailing notion of the relations of husband and wife in France is of a couple totally indifferent to each other—to say nothing worse—living entirely apart, and when meeting in society, treating each other with an odd sort of chilling ceremonious politeness. Nothing can be further from the fact. The *littérateurs* of France have found it convenient to represent the manners of only one section of society in Paris, and it is to a great extent to terrible De Balzac, cockney Paul, and others, that France owes the evil opinion held on this side of the water, of the habits and morals of their compatriots.

On re-entering my hotel, I found my friend Doctor Shaw waiting for me.

'Here you are,' said he. 'Where shall we dine?'

Now this was a question easy to answer on ordinary occasions.

'This is Christmas Day,' I said.

'Yes,' replied the doctor.

And we both looked at each other.

The fact was, that both the doctor and I wanted to dine à la Française, but we were much too English, having only known each other nine years, to mention that fact without reserve.

'Ah!' I said, 'you see—on Christmas Day—'

'One likes to have a Christmas dinner.'

'Just so. When one is in Paris—'

'One must do as London does—just so.'

There is no lack of English hotels in Paris; indeed, since the Anglo-mania, now prevalent in that big *bonbonnière* of a city, many restaurants, French as the time of 'Malbrook,' have broken out with 'British Tavern,' in large gold capitals; and, notwithstanding railways, exhibitions, and the *entente cordiale* produced by the Crimean wars, there still exists a strange misapprehension as to the appetites of the brave eccentric English. Foremost among these superstitions is the notion, that to a man we doat on mock-turtle soup. Numerous are the placards which inform the travelling Briton that 'Mock-turtle' is always ready. Offer your English mock-turtle and you secure him, think the *traiteurs*. It is the only soup produced by his brave but benighted chief of the kitchen!

Shaw and I dined and drank after the manner of our forefathers, and I trust the indigestion and headache which we suffered next day were convincing proofs of our patriotism.

After dinner, as we sat puffing our cigars at the open window that looked on to the brilliant street, he said to me—

'You know that English family that came to our hotel last week?'

'Yes.'

'Their servant girl is laid up in bed with rheumatism, ha! ha!'

'Not being a medical man, I don't exactly see the joke,' I said.

'Not one of them speaks a word of French,' continued Shaw.

'I know.'

'And they've had a French doctor to the girl,' and Shaw laughed again.

'Well.'

'The French doctor can't speak a word of English, and so physician and patient confer in signs. He doesn't understand the girl's symptoms, and he is bungling the case completely.'

'I really am at a loss to——'

'Wait a bit. You know Thomasine, the landlord's daughter, who says she can speak English, and can't. Well, she interprets for them. She only knows one phrase, which she told me she learnt in London, when she was there for the Exhibition; it is a question which she asks the patient every time she goes into the room. Can you guess what it is?'

'No.'

'I can't help laughing; it is so very applicable to a rheumatic case. Thomasine is always saying to her, "How's your poor feet?"'

We sat and smoked and drank, and drank and smoked, till we got up the proper Christmas post-prandial feeling; and went home to the smiling concierge, as every man should on Christmas night especially, at peace with ourselves and with goodwill to all men.

CHRISTMAS AT THE THEATRES.

English folk have their pantomimes, Parisians their revues. Of late years this species of entertainment has languished. As has been well pointed out in 'Figaro,' the revue is no longer a comic summary of the events of the year; dramatic writers are not permitted to make capital of political events. It is no longer possible to allude to a commercial panic by a dirge called 'La Morte de Commerce,' and a funeral procession of all the trades of Paris. The revue is now simply and purely theatrical; and the various dramatic events of the year are burlesqued, imitations of popular actors given, some well-arranged ballets danced, pungent parodies sung; and nothing more. Widely different was it when there was no dramatic censorship in the days of the famous *La Propriété c'est le Vol* and *La Foire aux Idées*.

While the popularity of pantomimes with us would seem to increase every year, the taste for revues has so much declined that few theatres now attempt them.

At the Palais Royal, 'Les Perduques' was so heartily disapproved of that in a few nights it was withdrawn. The doctor and I went to see it, and certainly such a farrago of unamusing absurdity was never witnessed. The only revue which stood its ground, with the exception of one played at a theatre we did not visit, was 'Eh! Allez donc Turlurette!' at the Variétés, and after the first act that was very poor. The Prologue or Introduction took place at the house of a literary lionne, where a number of guests are invited to hear the lionne herself read her own tragedy. The veteran Arnal sang and acted with his usual charm; and Dupuis, one of the best eccentric actors on the French stage, appeared as the meek, subdued husband of the brilliant blue-stocking. The company is seated, and the reading is begun: the husband's rapture is so great that he expresses it in the same manner as Mr. Pickwick his admiration at the leaders in the 'Eatanswill Gazette,' on the buff job of appointing a new keeper to the toll-gate—his eyes close with intense appreciation, the guests depart one by one; the unconscious authoress rolling forth her periods with such abstracted gusto that she is unaware of the defection of her audience. Arnal makes good his retreat by crying 'Charmant' as he retires; and finally the lady is left declaiming to one solitary auditor—her unconscious husband. The curtain falls on her as she continues to pour forth tragic verse; and the sleeping Dupuis is left close to the footlights, from which he is soon hidden by a property cloud, which bears upon its anything but undulating surface the words, 'C'est une reve!'

The first act reproduced a piece called 'La Reine de Crinoline,' and at the same time carried out the lionne idea of feminine domination and masculine submission. The ladies are the ruling and moving powers in the state. Ladies are

lawyers, ladies are soldiers, sailors, and drum-majors. A corps of awkward female conscripts, are drilled by a lady-serjeant, who gives an admirable imitation of the military brusquerie of a *vielle moustache*. The queen has left her court to fight her country's foes. The king, personated by Dupuis, remaining behind to weep and mourn her absence. Amid a grand flourish of drums and trumpets, the female warriors return; and the king, who has reason to fear his dread queen and master's presence, is agitated and confused. 'Loveliest, you are pale!' exclaims the anxious queen. 'Tis—'tis nothing; a passing indisposition—not more.' Then contemptuously remarks an old soldier, full sixteen years of age, with saucy eyes and a brilliant complexion, 'Les hommes, ils sont toujours pâle!' and so the scene proceeds. The rest of the *revue* was purely theatrical—the second act treating of the removal of the theatres, from the Boulevards to the Place du Châtelet; the spectres of successful melodramas holding a midnight meeting, and talking greater rubbish than could be supposed to be uttered by even melodramatic ghosts. In the third act the characters of the famous *Rothomago* are found fishing on the river in their dramatic costume, and when asked by their irate director the reason of their conduct, they reply that it was his orders that they should all meet in costume *sur la scène* (sur la Seine)—as bad a pun, perhaps, as was ever perpetrated. The piece concluded with some imitations of the most popular actors, Lafont, Lesueur, Landrol, Melingue, Brindeau, Bouffé, Chilly, Arnal, Dupuis, and others; and the curtain fell on a fairy scene with a fountain of real water; a number of the corps de ballet, dressed as *Pompiers*, supplying the fountain with fire buckets. Sad silliness, sham fun, and make-believe wit, utterly unworthy of French writers and French actors.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Of all days in the year, Parisians think most of New Year's Day—

possibly because it is new. *L'an est mort. Vive l'an!*

This first day is essentially a day of costume—a day for brilliant bonnets, glossy hats, varnished boots, perfume and cosmétique. Dressed, brushed, oiled, waxed, and gloved, Monsieur first pays his service to the Emperor. The approach to the Tuileries is a great sight, and philosophical must be that civilian who does not feel himself utterly crushed and humiliated by the neighbourhood of the gorgeous uniforms around him. The white stone buildings of the Rue de Rivoli form the background for a military tailor's Paradise. And how happy are the *militaires* inside the uniforms. How they feel that they are the show, that the world is looking at them, and that the occasion is their own. How complacently they sport their medals, and what a quantity they carry of those certificates of valour. The corpulent old gentleman in a cocked hat, now waddling across the road, carries an enormous weight of metal. First there is his *gorget*—that queer bit of brass that reminds one of the labels round the necks of bottles, still found in some old country houses, on which the word port or sherry is engraved. Then there is his sword, which is pendent from a wonderful complication of straps and buckles; and as for medals, the man must have fought victoriously in every battle since *Pharsalia*. Yet he is modest, though he wears large scarlet trousers, and sucks a bad cigar with the *bonhomie* of a bourgeois.

A French soldier is happier in scarlet trousers than in those of any other colour. In black, blue, green, or grey, he may exist; in scarlet he lives.

More costumes tramp and glitter by; soldiers, soldiers and soldiers; then, for variety, some officers of the Marine; soldiers again. Russians, haughty, elegant, and furred; magnificent Circassians, men whose bearing indicates their habit of looking down upon the world from mountain tops; and more cocked hats, swords, and scarlet trousers. Look on, Parisians, and admire, for

your army deserves it at your eyes. It is for this they stormed Alma, fought Inkermann, flooded Solferino, and pocketed Pekin. Vive la France! Vive le Tricolor, and Vive la Gloire!

On ordinary days only so many beggars are allowed to solicit alms, and they hold a permission from the police. On New Year's Day there is free trade in mendicancy, and at every tenth step you hear a beggar; but they are never obstinately importunate as English beggars are. Many of them bring out an old organ, that can sound only six notes, and turn the handle as they chant a dismal song, and the sight is touching to the stranger—the resident, who knows that these useful properties are safely stored, to be brought out once a year, is not moved by the sight. They are a singular race, the beggars of Paris, and would make an interesting study. One girl, of about twelve years of age, asked alms of me in French, English, German, and Italian. I discovered that in the last three languages she could only ask alms, that she had a quick eye for a foreign face, and seldom begged of her compatriots.

Among the huts that dot the Boulevards, there is the usual crowd hustling each other with undisturbable good humour. There are toys to more than realize the maddest fancies of imaginative childhood. Cigars à la musique, serpents à la musique, and some wonderful little figures, three inches high, that 'dance themselves,' if placed on a piano, play the instrument, or thrum upon a table; and they derive a motive power from the mere vibration. There is a toy in which the figures are boxing, and the more you shake them the harder they box. There are rabbits affected by every feeling and motion of which humanity is capable. Rabbits making love, rabbits jealous, rabbits billing and cooing in honeymoon bliss, rabbits getting very tipsy, rabbits quarrelling, rabbits fighting duels, and rabbits borne away killed and wounded after a mortal encounter. Not only are rabbits depicted suffering all the inconveniences of an

artificial civilisation, but frogs are also shown loving, fighting, drinking, dying, and the rest.

Human nature is mimicked everywhere with a strangely weird and terrible fidelity. The dolls are wonderful. Dolls dressed à la Pompadour, with blue satin hoods and spectacles, and an expression of face that says plainly, 'I am a doll-grandmother.' Dolls seated on thrones, a 'gorgeous canopy' above their heads, and a mien of perfect majesty upon their waxen brows. Then there are dolls in uneasy circumstances—dolls that, to use the term by which the French politely imply poverty, 'are not happy.' There is a brilliantly-complexioned young fellow in a blouse—a he-doll of the people—asking a young woman of the people, in a head-dress like an exaggerated extinguisher or ornamented fool's-cap, to dance with him. From the limpid look of her eyes we know that she will answer 'Oui,' and smile and curtsy graciously. Close by is a Breton doll, a sturdy fellow, with a rough outside but a warm heart within, his musette in his hand. The group was so perfect that I turned away, or I should have doubtless heard the Breton strike up the zing-zing of the musette, and seen the young couple foot it to the music, as only French folks, intoxicated with sugared water and gooseberry syrup, can foot it.

How happy must these dolls make their fortunate possessors, and how happy must be the little darling whose grandpapa, that worthy old bourgeois, has just presented her with a New-Year's gift!

The tastes of children are alike all over the world. Girls love something to pet, love, and fondle, comb, wash, above all, dress, and—crowning glory and power of motherhood—put to bed. Boys prefer an article with which they can do mischief—a sword, a gun, or a cannon—they like destruction—anything that smokes or smells like gunpowder. As a young friend of mine observed upon a 5th of November, 'If fireworks are so nice, what must a battle be?'

Le jour de l'an! Glorious sound

to the million round-faced, black-eyed little children of France. Glorious day when they receive a compliment from papa and mamma. Bounteous day of distribution from Christmas trees; when there is affectionate contention and loving struggles as to who shall first rush into the chamber of papa and mamma to greet them with the first word, the first kiss, and the first embrace. Happy anniversary for all, rich, poor, high and low, from the well-bred child, secluded from the world in the Faubourg St. Germain, to the shoeless gamin who starts at the glimpse of a cocked-hat in the distance! Day when the domestic affections, dimmed and blurred by constant contact with a hard material world, are rekindled and reanimated by the sight of joyous little faces that unite the expression of those whom inclination, fate, and faith, have united irrevocably. Day that to monsieur and madame brings back

the memory of the brilliant blush of their happy honeymoon; of those strongly-knit home ties flashed from the eyes of loving, lovely children, intoned in the sound of their sweet voices, and mellowed in their merry and innocent caresses. Bearded husband, strong-limbed and determined; elegant wife, sprightly, naïve, and charming; brown-faced *bonne* from Alsace, with ruddy cheeks and comfortable cap, cheery *bonne*, who carries the baby; little monsieur and smaller *mademoiselle*, leaping and frisking with delight—all are made happy as that central sun of the domestic universe, mamma, distributes to her darlings the gifts of the New Year. People of France, warlike, volatile, and gifted, what haughty and supercilious stranger, basking in the sight of your snug homes on the first day of the year, could deny that you are an affectionate, domestic, and home-loving people?

T. W. R.



CHRISTMAS IN THE COLONIES.

' Through varied climes, o'er many a plain and steep,
Doth England's vast colonial empire sweep;
See Canada, which Boreal blasts assail;
Ceylon oft parched with Equinoctial gale;
Forests, and gold, and corn, Columbia's pride,
While tea-plants clothe the Assam mountain's side.
The straits where Singapore the trade divides
Between two worlds, and queens it o'er the tides
Of Indian and Pacific Oceans vast;
The boundless scenes of many a triumph past;
And where the Austral heats rich fruits beget ;—
A diverse realm whereon the sun doth never set.'

DR. JOHNSON defines the word colony as 'a body of people drawn from the mother-country to inhabit some distant place'—a very short definition, and not one which is absolutely exhaustive. The French Protestants, for instance, who settled in the United Provinces and in Spitalfields, come exactly under this definition of a colony, and yet were not, in fact, colonies. The true and full meaning is—a body of men who go to some outlying possession previously taken by the mother-country by discovery or conquest, and in modern times fostered and governed until sufficiently grown to establish a kind of local government, subject to the imperial government and under its protectorate.

The colonies of Greece usually formed, at each exodus, a new state, in most respects independent of the parent one, and subject entirely to local and separate government, but still keeping up the friendly relations which descent, language, and customs would continue. Perhaps the relations kept up on a national scale between the daughter state, and that from which it sprung, might find somewhat of analogy or illustration in the connection, exemplified individually and socially, which subsisted between patron and client in the palmiest days of ancient Rome.

For a Greek colony to make war upon its parent state was accounted a sort of parricide, or rather matricide. Hellas was wherever Greeks were, just as to-day England is wherever waves its flag. Thus was Asia Minor, and thus were Sicily and Magna Græcia colonised.

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As in ancient times, no people colonised so widely, so substantially, and so systematically as the Romans, so, in modern times, no nation has colonised so extensively as our own. Other European nations have a long list of colonies; but they are, for the most part, small in territorial extent, only that of late years France has conquered and colonised Algeria, and is now in process of subduing a part of Cochin China and the peninsula of Malacca. The subjects and colonists of that empire on which the sun never sets must naturally enough pass that festival which we have just celebrated, under every variety of circumstance which difference of latitude or longitude, and therefore difference of climate and products, necessitates.

We hail Christmas, or used to do—for an old-fashioned Christmas is now rare—beneath a pale-blue sky, and a crisp and dry and frosty air; the green foliage of the summer trees lost, it is true, but abundantly supplied by the hoary fancies of Jack Frost; the bells of the neighbouring church pealing out in jovial tones, and announcing, in almost articulate voice, 'Peace on earth and good will towards men.' It is a misfortune that the first instalment of their song appears far from being realized; but in England, and with Englishmen, in all parts of the world, there is no mistake about the second.

There are somewhere about thirty-two colonies of England on the surface of the globe, and therefore our readers will pardon us for relieving their anxiety at the outset by saying that we do not propose to describe

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so many different Christmas dinners, but merely two or three, with a short description of their surroundings.

Tasmania, an island nearly as large as Ireland, situated southward from Australia, possesses, according to some persons well qualified to speak of it, one of the finest climates in the world. It has a winter not more severe than that of the south of France, a summer not hotter than that of London, and not so close and dusty; a spring equalling that of Montpellier, and an autumn like that of the south and west of England. The temperature is not marked by extremes of heat or cold; it is free from marsh miasmata, neither remittent nor intermittent fevers occur; the cool nights of the summer prevent the heat of the day from being relaxing, and the cold of winter is not such as to prevent agricultural and outdoor operations being carried on. Here are, throughout the colony, homes marked with all the characteristics of an English house. The small, thatched, hut-like house, built of slabs, and covered to the roof-tree with geraniums. The dairy farm-house, with its vines and trained flowers; the sunlight streaming through the leaves of English forest-trees, planted with a careful hand all round the house, to remind the settler, in the land of his adoption, of his old home sixteen thousand miles away; and the handsome and solid stone-built mansions, overshadowed by the oaks of Old England, with their wide domains of cultivated paddocks and green pastures, their hedgerows of hawthorn and sweet-briar, or in some cases of fuchsias six feet high; their orchards of tall pear-trees and apples; their haystacks, corn-ricks, barns, wool-sheds, and outhouses larger than the mansions themselves.

Every house has its garden, in which the flowers most carefully tended are those of home—the simple flowers of our childhood, primroses and cowslips, pansies and daisies; while the sweet little violet blooms under hedges of ever-flowering geraniums ten feet high. We quote a short and lively account of a Christmas here from the pen of a forty years' resi-

dent:—'The English reader must picture to himself a Christmas Day passed amidst the scenes of summer; a population turning out on New Year's Day to play at cricket, or to make pleasure excursions on the water; and an exhibition of fruits and flowers in December. We are the antipodes of home: the 21st of December is the longest day; the thermometer frequently stands, at Christmas, at 70° in the parlour. Now the citizen chooses the shady side of the street, or indoors throws up the window and lets down the blind. Beyond the precincts of town, the country is one vast expanse of verdure: the tall corn waving in the gentle summer breeze, while haymaking is going on, or some early crop courts, by its yellow tints, the sickle of the reaper. In the garden one is pleased with flowers of every hue, and tempted by luscious fruit. The farmer flings himself on his back on the lawn, and with merry child-faces around him, eats strawberries and cream to a delicious extent. In our ever-green forests, the cattle begin to seek the shelter of the trees, under whose grateful shade, in some cool brook, the boys are wont to bathe. Parroquets, in green and gold, flash past with their brilliant colours; the birds are merrily singing, and the locust makes his summer life one ceaseless song. No fire can be borne save in the kitchen; doors and windows are thrown open; flowers and evergreens grace the dining-rooms for lack of the traditional holly; but the roast beef and plum pudding of Old England retain their place of honour on the festive board. At that board the colonist, mindful of the custom of fatherland, unites his family, and after service in the neighbouring church, entertains his friends with grace and no stinted hospitality. And if Christmas does not come to him with the old associations of his youth—with its wind in gusts howling through leafless trees or fast-falling snow; if scene and clime and season invest the festival with a different aspect to that familiar to the Englishman at home, he is not the less happy; nor is he saddened

by the reflection that his neighbour is too poor to enjoy with him the good things of the season, with its holiday and feasting; for it is Christmas to every man, woman, and child in Tasmania, and there are none so poor that they cannot have in abundance the immemorial fare; and on all sides is heard the old English greeting, "A merry Christmas and a happy New Year." As the daughters of the Pharaohs, who in the marble palaces and gilded halls of their foreign husbands sighed for a draught of the waters of the sacred Nile, so do the daughters of Tasmania, under the burning suns of India, though they possess all the rich fruits and gorgeous flowers of the tropics, and live in palaces, yet sigh for the delicious climate of their own loved home, and prefer the scent of the simple mimosa to the most noble rhododendron of the Sikkim Himalaya.

The Australian colonies generally have, if not quite, very nearly the advantages of Tasmania. Here, also, nature is prodigal of her gifts, the forests abounding in beautiful trees, and thronged with birds of the gayest plumage—the Australian mocking-bird, called by the colonists the laughing jackass, is a species of woodpecker. The following curious account is given of its vocal performances. His chant, frequently kept up for a lengthened period, is the most laughter-provoking of sounds. It is, indeed, impossible to hear with a grave face the jocularities of this feathered jester. He commences with a low, cackling sound, gradually growing louder, like a hen in a fuss. Then suddenly changing his note, he so closely imitates Punch's trumpet, that you would almost swear that it was the jolly 'roo-too-too' of that old favourite that you heard. Next comes the prolonged bray of an ass, followed by an almost articulate exclamation, which might very well be translated, 'Oh! what a guy!' and the whole winds up with a suppressed chuckle, ending with an uproarious burst of laughter, which is joined in by a dozen others hitherto silent.

A writer on the Australian colonies would give us an extraordinary

idea of the size of men there, for describing the emu, a bird very like an ostrich, he says:—"This bird often stands nearly as high as a man, varying from five to seven feet." The emu, however, in its great and increasing rarity, is fast becoming 'simillima nigroque cygno.'

These adjuncts following, do not, however, promise any increase of comfort to the Australian settler. Snakes and lizards are numerous, and the deaf adder, a disgusting and dangerous creature, guanas, a kind of lizard four feet in length. Frogs are numerous, and sometimes intrude into the settler's dwelling. Scorpions, centipedes, and other smaller members of the reptile tribe, are also sufficiently, and more than sufficiently, numerous. Snakes, especially, appear to exist in inconceivable variety, for there are snakes of the following variety of name—black, brown, diamond, ringed, hazel, whip, and many others. The black snake, when broiled on the fire, has the very good gastronomic quality of becoming white as an eel and tender as a chicken.

These are the reptile torments, but the insects are really the greatest nuisance, on account of their more constant presence, and the greater difficulty of guarding against them. A colonist says: "The mosquitoes and flies constitute, during six months of the year, an intolerable nuisance: these detestable items of entomology are a perfect torment to the settler, leaving him no peace, either by day or night; the mosquitoes ruthlessly exact their tribute of blood from beneath his irritated and tortured skin. Fortunately, it is chiefly to new comers that the bite of the mosquito is extremely annoying, and it does not often produce any swelling on those who have become by long residence habituated to it. Then there are "lion-ants"—ugly, venomous, black creatures, the sting of which is as severe as that of a wasp; wood-ticks, that burrow under the skin—and other abominations. Towards the North, in the neighbourhood of Cape York, there are ant-hills of an enormous size, sometimes twelve feet in height. The ants are of a pale-

brown colour, and a quarter of an inch long. These, however, must bide their time, for they have no white settlers to provoke at present.

The common flies are a more general nuisance, settling so thickly and pertinaciously on every article of food, as to make it almost impossible to avoid swallowing some during the progress of every meal. One small matter on the other side is, that the native bees do not sting, and produce very fine honey and wax.

However, the climes of the sunny south do not contain more than their share of English colonies; for where in the wide world exists any considerable extent of country that bears not Englishmen; and what sea or port where does not wave

* The flag that's braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze ?

That Christmas in the colonies may be anything but merry, let us see how a poor unsuccessful emigrant spent Christmas Day some years ago in the remote wilds of Canada. Here, though the summer months are hot, the winter is perfectly Russian. The rivers are frozen over, or blocked with ice for six months of the year. About Christmas the atmosphere is dry and exhilarating, and soon after come great falls of snow; then the smooth-gliding sleighs make their appearance, drawn by horses, to whose harness bells are attached, that jingle merrily as they trot over the frozen surface of the roads. All work, of course, is at a standstill, and nothing attended to but visiting, sleighing, and enjoyment among the well-to-do classes.

Amidst the festivities and jollity of a Canadian Christmas, however, one poor emigrant at least had a sorry time of it. He had been unsuccessful, and his stock of money and provisions exhausted, hoping against hope for work, but in vain; and, to crown all, Christmas came, but no work. In the words of the poor man himself, 'This was the climax. I counted the contents of our scanty purse, and small, indeed, was the sum that remained. My resolution

was taken. I bought a load of firewood, split it, and piled it indoors, that my children might not have to go out to fetch it, and carefully stopped all the chinks and openings in the walls and floor to exclude the cold. I then laid in a small store of salt pork and potatoes, and with a wallet on my shoulder, and one dollar in my pocket, started before daylight on the morning of Christmas Day, after a sorrowful leave-taking, to walk over the hills eighty miles to the nearest city, where I hoped to meet with some occupation by which I might be able to support my wife and family till the genial spring returned. As I closed the outer door of the house, I seemed to lose half the courage that had hitherto animated me. The morning was dark and starless; heavy clouds obscured the sky; the sullen roar of the ice, drifted up and down by the tide in the neighbouring river, was wafted drearily to my ears: everything seemed to be in accordance with the depression of my feelings; and after walking about an hour, my reflections became so painful that I turned round to retrace my steps. The feeling, however, was but temporary. "Go ahead!" came to my mind; I fancied, like Curran, that my little boys were pulling in the opposite direction, and I once more turned my face to the East. To add to my discomfort, with the appearance of daylight it began to rain, at first slightly, then heavily, and at last settled into a downright pour. After walking thirty miles, I felt so jaded, from the constant soaking and bad condition of the roads, that I was glad to stop at a tavern, which opportunely appeared at nightfall, but where little denoted Christmas save the blazing logs, of which there was no stint, and by which I gladly recovered from the soaking and cold I had suffered. Certainly to me this Christmas was no merry one, nor were the prospects of a happy new year very bright.

Our good neighbours, the French, do not call us '*les perfides Anglais*' for the first time in the last century or two; but we shall hardly expect to learn this fact from a Frenchman of

the time when Agincourt was just fought, and Crecy no very remote tradition. 'It may be said [of the English, neither in war are they brave, nor in peace are they faithful; and as the Spaniards say, "England is a good land with a bad people."'] Again he says: 'The people are proud and seditious, with bad consciences, and are faithless to their word, as experience has taught. These villains hate all sorts of foreigners; and although they have a good land and a good country, they are all constantly wicked, and moved by every wind, for they will now love a prince; turn your head, they will wish him killed and crucified. The people of this nation mortally hate the French, as their old enemies, and always call us France cheneve (French knave), France dogne, and so on.'

Again: 'In this country you will not meet with any great nobles whose relations have not had their heads cut off. Certes, I should like better to be a swineherd, and preserve my head: for this affliction falls furiously upon the heads of the great nobles.'

But what can be expected of people who call our national dish *rosbif*, and prefer 'marsh chickens' to the most tender delicacy?

At the risk of cavil I choose to call, for the purposes of this paper, the English community in Paris, a colony—I have seen it so called by other people, and it suits me now.

There are two immortal plum-puddings celebrated in the annals of the English colony at Paris; and I am only sorry that I cannot just now unkenel the records where their memory is preserved, but must trust to a somewhat treacherous memory. An English colonist in Paris, determined to have an English plum-pudding for his Christmas dinner, gave his French cook the most elaborate directions as to the composition and preparation of the delicious compound, according to the dictates of Mrs. Glasse. Having thus insured the proper preparation of the pudding, he left it to his cook, with instructions for it to be well boiled, which my fair readers who are versed in the coquinary art know to be most essential.

The expatriated Englishman looked forward with considerable pleasure to his pudding, and under such circumstances almost considered the *rosbif*, and especially French *rosbif*, a bore. Looking longingly for the introduction of the anxiously-waited-for luxury, he beheld his chef de cuisine, anxious for his credit, bearing the pudding himself—in a soup tureen! The vexatious truth instantly flashed upon our countryman, that although he had taken every precaution to insure the proper mixing and manipulation of the pudding, he had forgotten the mention of the pudding-bag. And so it came about that an English plum-pudding became French soup; and though by no means *soupe-maigre*, I do not suppose it was eaten with any relish, if at all—which latter hypothesis I take to be the most probable.

There is another pudding whose history is preserved in the traditions of the English colony at Paris. Briefly, for our subject is voluminous and our space scanty, the contriver of the second pudding, with the experience of the former failure in his memory, not only superintended the manipulation of the pudding, but, putting aside his dignity for the occasion, tied it in a bag himself. Knowing the necessity, well known also to our fair caterers, of leaving room for the expansion of the unctuous contents of the pudding-bag, he tied it loosely, and left it to the care of his cook to boil.

When this second Parisian colonial plum-pudding came to table, it made its appearance in the shape of a great bullet or shot, harder than lead, and altogether like a stone. The contriver of the pudding demanded an explanation, and was informed that the cook, finding the bag tied so loosely, had taken the responsibility of tying it tighter; and so again, the most anxious precautions of an Englishman to secure an English plum-pudding for his dinner at a Parisian Christmas were disappointed.

From a paper in a Cape Town journal I extract a very graphic description of the anticipations of Christmas in Cape Colony, which,

with one or two elisions, I give in the appropriate sentences of the writer: it is from the column usually devoted to the gossip of the colony, and therefore called 'Town Talk.'

'Christmas Eve! which being the case, and as all men say that honesty is the best policy, I think I had better make a clean breast of it at starting, and confess that I don't mean to write anything at all to-day, except Christmas talk. In the English "Prayer Book" you occasionally see the heading, "*For the Epistle*" instead of "*The Epistle*," as usual; in the same way let the reader suppose the title of this column to be "For Town Talk" in place of "Town Talk." And then, when he has read thus far, he can, if he so please, skip all the rest. If, however, he is a good, genial sort of man, he won't do anything of the sort, but read it right through, by way of impressing upon his mind that it is Christmas: for unless one is a very old stager here, or has the honour of being colonial-born, it is not quite so easy to realize the presence of Christmas. The old gentleman comes amongst us here in a garb so very different from that in which you and I used to hail him in the olden time, that sometimes he does not seem like the same individual. Church folks, I suppose, would not hear of an Act of Parliament, "For the transfer of that holiday commonly called Christmas Day to the coldest part of the winter season." I don't know why they should not, though; Church authorities have done such things before now. There have been endless quarrels about the proper time of keeping Easter—in fact, I am not quite sure that the Greeks and Romans have come to the settlement of the question yet. And then, you will remember, also, that it is written in history how a notice was once affixed to a Devonshire church-door, "There'll be no Sunday here next Sunday, 'cause measter's gwaun tu Dawlish to preach."* Ergo, if Sundays have

been known that were Easter Sundays in some parts and not Easter Sundays in other parts, two or three hundred miles away; and if there really could be 'no Sunday next Sunday,' why could not Christmas Day be transferred to the winter time? I am sure if Christmas had fallen a few months back, in that cold weather when the snow was on Table Mountain, we could have clustered round the fire in right earnest, punished the roast beef and plum-pudding in prime style, and done the port wine and walnuts afterwards gloriously. To-morrow I hope we shall do our best to behave like true Britons and loyal subjects of her Most Gracious Majesty. If it is not possible to eat as respectable a dinner with the thermometer at eighty as at thirty, it is possible to be jolly and good-tempered, and, what is still better, kind-hearted and considerate to all about us—as, indeed, we ought to be every day.'

People with the newest, most improved, and enlightened ideas have got hold of the notion that Christmas-boxes and revelry, and all that sort of thing, are by no means sage. Your servant sells you his labour, they say, and you buy it; why should he want Christmas-boxes any more than the man who sells you so many yards of cloth or calico? Now I venture to think that the good-natured reader who has read thus far will see the weakness of this style of argument. As a very jolly friend of mine, rolling along under sixteen stone weight of rotundity, or thereabouts, but a very shrewd and a very successful man withal, used to say, 'You must grease the wheels sometimes;' and in your mind's eye don't you see that old woodcut in 'Æsop's Fables' of the unbent bow lying on the ground?

But there is a motive for keeping Christmas which is far more beautiful and altogether excellent than greasing of wheels and unbending of bows, and that is, the godlike

* In a village which I knew well, the parson, as was common years ago, had to perform the duties at two distant churches; and to provide for this, the announcement was made by the clerk in the following

terms:—'Notice is hereby given, that our parson will preach here and at St. Edmund's each Sunday to all eternity.' He meant to say 'alternately.'

feeling of benevolence, the genuine, earnest desire to make others happy, without the shadow of a thought of any benefit to be derived by oneself. That is the sort of feeling to keep Christmas with; and let the thermometer stand at what degree it will, the man who is actuated by it will be sure to have a merry time of it. He won't be afflicted with abstract mental calculations about Christmas-boxes; no sense of dignity and self-respect will withhold him from joining in the merry dance and song, even though his voice be none of the sweetest, nor his movements of the most graceful. If you look at it rightly, a certain degree of *abandon* at Christmas-time, springing from pure benevolence, is highly respectable, and a dance, 'join hands, up the middle and down again,' a most praiseworthy occupation. And suppose you admit that it is all vanity of vanity, yet out of such vanity comes recreation in the truest etymological meaning of the word; a forgetting of past vexations and quarrels, and a girding up of oneself with the voluntary obliteration of past trials, to the fresh battle which we all have to wage, year by year, with life.

In almost all the colonies there are Church establishments; and the religious celebrations peculiar to that especially interesting season of the Church are, of course, carried out with all the zeal which characterizes the season in England.

There must be, however, a very appreciable difference in the manner physically of celebrating our greatest and pleasantest anniversary. We have seen something of these differences as they occur in Canada, Australasia, and Africa. India falls out of our subject, for it is not a colony. Ceylon, I believe, in distinction to the peninsula, is a colony, and here the colonists, principally nutmeg and coffee planters, spend their Christmas at a time of year when the fervid tropical heat is somewhat lessened by the declination of the sun to the south, though the temperature is even then of a kind to astonish the new colonists for a year or two. Ceylon has, however, the advantage of possessing an alterna-

tive climate; and the mountain ranges of the interior, not being so inaccessible or so distant as the Himalayas in India, most of the planters, at least, can contrive to spend the very hottest seasons, at such an elevation as materially to alleviate the fervid tropical heat.

Of the colonies in Europe, we know, to our cost, Gibraltar and Malta, which figure for so much in the expenditure of the year. Few people, however, know anything of the little colony of Heligoland; and possibly to many the lines following will reveal, for the first time, the true etymology of the name, and the meaning of its flag, which is tricolour:—

'Green is the land,
Red is the cliff,
White is the sand:

These are the colours of the Holy Land.'

Well! these colonies of ours are delicious places in many respects; but though climate, and luscious fruits and large sense of freedom, and plenty to be had in return for little labour, are recommendations, yet they have their drawbacks: for myself, nothing would compensate me for the attacks of mosquitoes, cockroaches, vampires, rats, ants, and other obnoxious insects, more or less the bane of most of our tropical colonies; and as to weather, I am inclined to be of the opinion of our merry monarch, Charles II., who thought that of all countries in the world, England had the happiest climate, since in it one could be out of doors more days, and more hours of the day, than in any other country under the sun.

While, then, I am glad that those of my countrymen, who, either by choice or through the imperative calls of business or professional life, can enjoy the good old Christmas festivities, under every variety of climate, and under every diversity of circumstance, I must congratulate myself and my home readers on the fact that we can celebrate this great annual festival at home in Merry England. Where the salutation is

'God save you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Christ our Lord in Bethlehem
Was born this happy day.'

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

ART going, Old Year, with no promise fulfilled?
 Why desert me so soon, with no sweetness distilled
 From thy fair summer roses?
 I stand at the brink of the streams as they meet,
 The streams called the years, and a new era greet
 As the old era closes.

O hurry not on! thoughts are crowding so fast;
 Give me time—give me breath—I must call back the past,
 Old Year, ere thou diest;
 Some bright hopes recall, and some sorrows forget;
 So much thou hast brought, I've not done with thee yet,
 Too quickly thou fliest.

Hark! the bells have begun! 'tis thy death knell, Old Year;
 I grieve for thy parting—and enter with fear
 The year that is dawning:
 The wind moans and wails like the saddest farewells
 Of many sad hearts—but the inconstant bells
 E'en now welcome the morning.

What bring'st thou, New Year? dare I look in thy face,
 And question thee boldly, and bid thy hand trace
 The pathway before me?
 Ah! no, my heart faileth, and silence is best:
 I ask not for knowledge, but *only to rest*—
 God's mercy is o'er me.

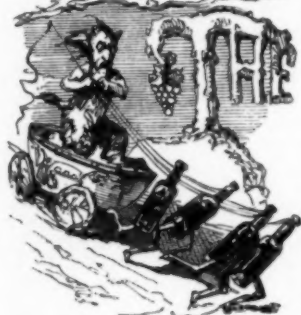
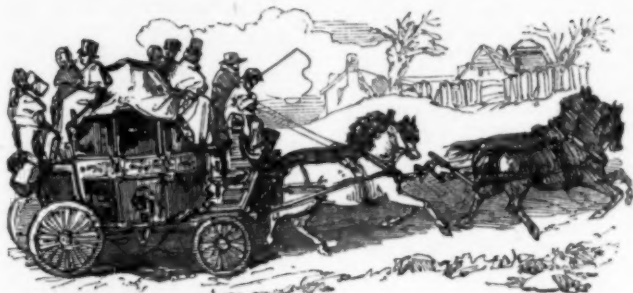
Oh! friends, I pray for ye! the wayworn and old,
 And the youthful to whom life is shining like gold,
 And love seems a glory;
 For the hearts rich in ventures by land and by sea,
 Lest the storm winds should rise,—O! I tremble for ye,
 And the dangers before ye.

And I pray for the hearts with *few* ventures at stake,
 Who lose all or win,—whom no shoutings will wake,
 Till *one* voice hath spoken;
 Then faint though the whisper, they answer and rise,
 And follow and follow with blindfolded eyes—
 Must the Idol be broken?

Now the bells are all silent, the Old Year is gone;
 Quite away in the darkness the New cometh on,
 With a quiet step and pressing;
 And we pray through the days to be guided aright,
 And we smile at our fears, for our clouds turn to light,
 Illumed with God's blessing.

M. DE LYS.

CHRISTMAS WITH GRAMPUS.



WINGS of Mnemosyne bear me to the county town of P—. The Goddess of Memory sets me down at the age of ten before an old-fashioned, red-brick mansion, guarded by curiously-wrought iron gates, in which the initial letters of my name are cunningly introduced and twisted round with divers flourishes. Two venerable link-extinguishers which, to my infantile mind, seemed poor relations of my grandmother's car trumpet, adorn the portal. The keystone of the arched doorway is carved into the likeness of a jovial satyr, whose port-

trait alternating with that of a serious nymph, is repeated all along the street. The bust of an amiable panther with a ring in its mouth, constitutes the knocker, which has been no sooner raised with a gentle rat tat, than Peter opens the door. Peter is a diffident youth, in mulberry-coloured smalls, rather groggy—to use a modern phrase—upon his pins, and with a decided tendency to falter in his speech—the result of a long and continued series of blowings-up from his master, my uncle, of whom he stood in chronic terror. Then follows a pattering of tiny, snow-besprinkled feet upon the hall floor, a throwing off of cloaks, tippets, turn-overs, pelisses, clogs (observe the antiquated character of these now-discarded garments) by my sisters; then a triumphant entry of my great-aunt Tabitha, borne by two purple-nosed gentlemen in a sedan-chair (like a female sentry-box off duty), and now we are all inside the house.

A queer old house it was to be sure, with high wainscot panels running along the walls, elaborate plaster cornices running round the ceilings, and sturdy old twisted oaken banisters running up the stairs. The windows were deeply recessed in massive walls—you could lean upon the heavy sash-bars without breaking them; the small side-panes were filled with yellow glass, through which you seemed to look upon perpetual sunshine in the garden behind the house, though the day was never so gloomy. Seen through this cheerful medium, the very snow flakes fell like showers of gold in Danaë's lap (there was a picture of that mysterious subject over a sideboard in the dining-room, which I often looked at in childish wonder), and when Peter stepped across to the coach-house beyond, his complexion assumed a beautiful gamboge tint. The dead, dank leaves

which lay about the grass were transformed into golden fragments; the gravel paths became a mass of sparkling amber. What a lovely atmosphere enveloped everything as we peeped through those yellow panes! How cold and dull the self-same scene appeared through ordinary glass! I have often thought of that dear old window in later years, and how pleasant it would be to look upon the world through some moral transparency equally enlivening. I think there are some of us who have this happy gift—who see life and its cares, disappointments, losses, uglinesses, all thus delicately tinted. To them, the absence of a dear friend, the arrival of a dun downstairs, the failure of a favourite scheme, the faithlessness of a mistress, the faults and imperfections of mankind at large appear *en couleur de rose*. Ah! lucky mortals, who can thus see all things through this sweet and mellowed light!

My uncle is an old gentleman in a dark-blue coat and brass buttons. The collar of this coat is of the ancient type, padded and rolled, and so large that it touches the back of his head. His legs are enveloped in drab-coloured cloth breeches and tightly-buttoned gaiters, terminating in a pair of highly-polished and very square-toed shoes. His cuffs, instead of contracting at the wrist, expand in that direction like a flattened muffin bell, and nearly cover his hands, only leaving to view on either side a row of shiny nails—so oval in shape that they resemble tiny plovers' eggs, split down lengthwise. A ponderous chronometer is concealed in a fob about S.E. of the lowest button of his waistcoat. From this depends a massive gold chain of such dimensions that any individual link would make an average-sized signet-ring. As my uncle inclines to corpulency, it requires some effort, and no small amount of puffing and blowing, to extricate this machine from its receptacle. That operation is usually effected by resting his elbows on the arm-chair, seizing the bunch of seals with both his hands, and gently swaying his body to and fro, until the desired end is attained,

and the watch comes out with an awful jerk. It must have had first-rate works to withstand the shock. An inferior article could never have survived such treatment. As for replacing it in its original position, after finding out the time, that was a feat which my uncle never attempted in society. My impression is that it could not have been done without assistance. I used to think that he rang for Peter to help him when we were gone; but on this point that trusty retainer, on being questioned by us, persisted in a discreet silence.

My uncle's features are tolerably good. He has a large kind eye and a capacious forehead. His nose, perhaps, partakes too much of that metallic hue which is said to be the result of an over-partiality for port wine, and his lips, especially in winter, are somewhat purple, but altogether he is rather a good-looking old gentleman. I must not, however, forget to state, that he has no teeth—at least in present wear. Two or three sets of grinders designed by dental artists of celebrity, we know, have been made for him, and were, indeed, discovered by my brother Tom (a youth of great promise, and an inquiring mind) stowed away on the third shelf of the left-hand library cupboard, one morning when my uncle was out, but he never wore them.

Nature, ever bountiful in compensating for such defects, enabled him to digest his food without their assistance, although his manner of eating—when nose and chin came into close proximity—caused us children some surprise, and induced disrespectful comparisons between our revered relative and a grotesquely-carved wooden nut-cracker which we used at dessert. Whether it was this peculiarity, or the general awe which we felt for him suggested the name, I cannot remember, but he was familiarly known to us under the sobriquet of *Grampus*. Grampus belonged to that fine old school of British worthies who entertain a profound contempt for the abilities of the rising generation. He was perpetually cross-examining us on the

subject of our youthful studies. Pinnoek's 'Catechism of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge' was a joke to the multiplicity of his questions. From the moment I began to learn the Latin grammar, he was perpetually down upon me with regard to the declensions, and 'As in præsentî,' seizing every unguarded moment to inquire, for instance, what the genitive case plural number of '*Lapis, a stone,*' was, and putting me through all the tenses of the irregular verbs, as if he took a malicious pleasure in their anomalous conjugation, always declaring, at the end of our interview, that I knew nothing whatever about it, and averring that I should terminate my career as a professional dustman—an occupation which, in those days, seemed positively cheerful to me compared with the study of syntax.

'When I was your age' (nine), 'you young rascal,' (such were the endearing epithets with which he occasionally greeted us)—'when I was your age, I could read "Ovid's Metamorphoses" straight off without a dictionary. Can you? No, I dare say not. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Tell your father to buy you "Dryden's Ovid" immediately, or—stop, I'll give it you myself.' And down he took that excellent and highly-instructive work from his library. The reader will probably recollect the nature of the anecdotes which it contains, and how admirably they are adapted for the perusal of children. It was my first introduction to the classics.

During the winter evenings my brother Tom and I were in the habit of going to tea at his house occasionally. This was curiously enough looked upon in the light of a recreation by our papa and mamma, who, no doubt, derived pleasure from the society of Grampus. As for ourselves, we considered it a sort of hebdomadal sacrifice to which we were bound to submit for the benefit of our intellects. The old gentleman brewed his souchong, rang for the muffins and seed-cake (I have contracted a violent antipathy to carraways from the painful associations which their flavour

recalls), and then proceeded to recite whole odes of Horace, to which we listened in silent awe with our mouths full of bread and butter, or quoted a lengthy passage from the 'Rape of the Lock,' compared with which we were told that 'Marmion' was simple twaddle. One unlucky evening, I had preceded Tom by about half an hour, and found Grampus reading the 'Morning Chronicle.' Laying down the paper, he welcomed me, and began retailing the news of the day, in which the town of Philadelphia chanced to be mentioned. 'Of course you know where it is?' he asked.

'Yes, uncle,' said I, 'in America.'

'North or South?'

'South,' said I, after some hesitation.

'Pon my word, you're a pretty fellow!' roared Grampus, waxing wrath. 'How old are you, sir?'

'Nine, uncle, next Tuesday week.'

'And don't know more of geography than that! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Go home, sir, directly, and tell your father you don't know where Philadelphia is.'

Returning in deep dismay after this *contretemps*, I met my brother on the road, and confided to him the reason of my disgrace.

'Which did you say, North or South?' asked Tom, who was rather a sharp boy for his age. I told him. 'All right,' said Tom; 'then of course it must be the other.' And off he trotted to my great uncle's house.

'Tom!' said Grampus, after greeting him; 'before you take off your greatcoat, tell me, where Philadelphia is.'

'In North America,' cried Tom, with tremendous confidence.

'Bravo! that's a good boy, there's half a sovereign for you!' said Grampus, pouring out the tea. I will do Tom the justice to say that he subsequently made over five shillings to me: but it was some time before I was restored to my uncle's favour.

It will be gathered from the foregoing anecdote that our anticipations of Christmas Day with Grampus were those of pleasure not altogether

unalloyed. At the same time it must be remembered that most of us had hardly completed, or were only just emerging from our teens, an age when the prospect of a good dinner and a game of snapdragons go far towards insuring jollity. The mince-pies alone would have restored our equanimity and banished dull care from our breasts while we stowed away their contents—elsewhere.

We enter the room, then, in single file, with smiling, rosy faces; and wishing our revered relative a merry Christmas and a happy new year ('compliments of the season' was a phrase not then in vogue), walk up to him one by one to be kissed, a ceremony which he went through after a fashion peculiar to himself. As soon as we came within reach of his arm, he pounced upon us in regular order, drew us each violently towards him, slipped a half-sovereign into our hands, imprinted a hasty salute upon our cheeks, and then as hastily thrust us off. Whether he thought, as an old bachelor, and being unaccustomed to the habits of children, that we might bite him playfully, or whether he conceived we should notice too plainly his own dental incapacities, I cannot say, but this was his method of osculation, and a very remarkable one it was. Kissing is a habit which does not exist in all families. I confess that I have rather a tendency to indulge in it myself, having a fair field for the exercise of that accomplishment among my female cousins. I believe I inherit it from my mother's side, and trust it may be transmitted to future generations.

There was a curious old clock in the hall; none of your vulgar modern timepieces, all head and no body, supported on flimsy brackets, but a good old-fashioned concern, standing about eight feet high, in a walnut case with a big door, which, being opened, revealed a little perpendicular rope-walk of strings, chains, weights, and pulleys. The pendulum was as large as a cheeseplate, and wagged to and fro with such a majestic tick that you would as soon have thought of digging the Great Mogul in the ribs as trying to interfere with its motion. As for the face,

it was a regular horological encyclopædia. There was nothing that it didn't tell you. Besides indications of the hour hand, and the minute hand, and the seconds hand, it informed you of the day of the week, the state of the atmosphere, and described the earth's orbit. My brother Tom, who has been looking over this manuscript, declares that there was one department in the works designed with a view to ascertain the latitude and longitude of any given place at a moment's notice; but this I admit I do not remember, and must beg the reader to receive the statement with caution, as Tom, though a very well-meaning young man, has a habit of romancing which has much grown on him of late.

My great uncle being, as I have said, a very old-fashioned gentleman, had fixed on the unearthly hour of four o'clock for dinner. If any of my readers have ever been condemned to dine at that excessively inconvenient time they will fully sympathise with the protest which I record against this inhuman, and, I trust, now happily exploded practice. Dinner at four o'clock is a social anachronism almost amounting to a crime. You may dine at one, or even at two, and (with the intervention of a cup of tea) be prepared for supper at eight; or you may make a substantial lunch in the middle of the day and be ready for your principal repast at seven; but four o'clock is neither one thing nor the other. If you have lunched you have, as the phrase goes, spoilt your dinner. You make feeble efforts to eat, and abandon your knife and fork. The consequence is that by-and-by, at supper-time, you are famishing and there is no supper for you. If, on the other hand, you have *not* lunched, you sit down to your feast like a starving man, eat ravenously, and dyspepsia is the inevitable result. A person who invites his friends to dine at four is guilty of cruelty to animals, and ought to be proceeded against under Martin's Act.

For us children, to be sure, it did not so much matter. I cannot answer for the experience of others, but I never yet met with a youth

under the age of discretion who was not ready to eat cheerfully on the shortest notice and at any time. It seems to be a provision of nature that children should be always ready for natural provisions. The instant we came out of church (where, I fear, we had been far more occupied in criticising the evergreen decorations and indulging in visions of turkey and plum-pudding than in listening to Parson Blowhard's sermon) we were regaled with an enormous piece of currant cake, which, however, did not much interfere with our appetite at four. So when the clock had struck that hour, and the cuckoo on it had fluttered punctually after its usual fashion, and retired into the little door just as coolly as if there had been no Christmas Day at all, Peter opened the drawing-room door, and in a voice quaking with emotion—partly due to the occasion, but principally out of dread of his master—exclaimed—

‘Pleesir dinner’s on the tablesir!’

At that instant Grampus rose to his legs and gave his arm to my mother; papa followed with my maiden aunt, Tabitha, a lady of few personal attractions but of untold wealth, from whom we had great expectations, but who subsequently retired from this sphere bequeathing her property in equal shares between the Society for the Encouragement of Indigent Organ-grinders and the Metropolitan Dustman’s Shirt and Collar Association—two excellent institutions now unhappily become obsolete. My brothers, sisters, and I brought up the rear, descending the stairs with great gravity, except Tom, who insisted on executing a sort of brief Feejee war-dance on every third step, until Grampus, whom we believed to be safely out of sight, caught a glimpse of his shadow on the opposite wall.

‘Halloa there, you young scape-grace! what are you about?’ shouted my uncle.

Tom muttered out something about losing his shoe, and with great presence of mind knelt down on the landing to untie one of his highlows and tie it up again. Presently we all entered the dining-room, where there was always a mingled smell of

port wine and French polish. We gathered round the table and sidled into our places. My uncle said grace, and the covers were removed by Peter (who was by this time in a state of awfully nervous vibration) and Betty, a female domestic in a very black dress and a very white apron. As we sat down in all about twelve, and as children are addicted to that summary and often indecorous manner of feeding known as bolting their dinner, it was generally understood that no one was to begin until we had been all helped. This injunction, however, not extending to the rolls already placed before us, we employed the interval in consuming them and in disposing the napkins in which they were wrapped very tightly round our waists.

At last every one was served and we all began to ply our knives and forks. What a precious clattering was heard, what a Babel of voices as the wine went round (we little ones were allowed one glass apiece, and generally drank it in a diluted form)! How quickly soup, fish, turkey, roast beef, with all their accompaniments, disappeared before us! This was the only day in the year on which we were allowed to choose a dish at table, and of course we selected all the unwholesome ones.

It was a beautiful and gratifying sight to behold honest Peter staggering into the room under the weight of that *summum bonum* of our expectations, that long-looked-for consummation of Christmas hopes—the PLUM-PUDDING; an enormous affair quivering in a little sea of liquid fire and surmounted by a generous sprig of holly and red berries. What a graceful contour it presented in that lovely spheroid form, gently merging into corrugations where the pudding-cloth had left a pleasing impress! I say *pleasing*, because I truly and conscientiously believe that no good Christmas pudding can be made but in a bag. It has become part of the tradition and cannot be omitted. I have dined at houses in later years where this noble emblem of Yuletide has appeared in an artificial shape, such as that which the baser *gallantine* and the more effeminate *blanc-mange* are wont to as-

sume, and when the powdered menial has offered it to me I have declined the gross imposture. No; if I am to eat pudding at Christmas it shall be a Christmas pudding.

When the cloth had been removed, a fine polished surface of dark Spanish mahogany was revealed, on which the richly-chased *épergne*, the delicately-cut decanters and finger-glasses sparkled in the light of a dozen spermaceti candles. The silver, too, did ample credit to Peter's care and plate-powder, being of a dazzling brilliancy. Every article on the table was mirrored in its surface, and we children found a source of instant gratification in beholding each other's faces reflected, topsy-turvy, on opposite sides of the festive board. When the servants left the room, my uncle filled a bumper of port, having previously executed a similar office for my mother and Aunt Tabitha, who always sat on either side of him. This was a signal for 'hands round the table,' an important ceremony in our eyes, and without which Christmas Day would have been as a thing of nought. It consisted in everyone's inserting his or her palm into that of his or her neighbour and using it as a pump-handle for the space of half a minute with appropriate action. This parallel is the more complete because it actually did draw water from some eyes; my Aunt Tab, for instance, being always ready to cry on the shortest notice. I do not mean my readers to infer from this circumstance that she was in the least degree unhappy, far from it. On these occasions she was usually, for her, in excellent spirits; but this was her peculiar mode of indicating hilarity. It is the way with some people. I have heard of individuals who have a morbid inclination to laugh at a funeral. Perhaps philosophers may be able to give some common solution to these paradoxical phenomena of nature. After the solemn rite of 'hands round the table' had been concluded, Grampus proceeded to amuse us by a variety of entertainments, chiefly based upon and in connection with the dessert and dinner service. He peeled oranges in the most ingenious and apparently mira-

culous manner, turning the rind inside out into hemispheres of perfect symmetry without spilling a drop of the juice, and then fashioning it into miniature cocked-hats, little boats, and fictitious porkers. He ate imaginary wax tapers, previously cut out of the heart of a Ribstone pippin by the simple aid of a cheese-taster, having added a slice of burnt almond thereto for a wick. He converted a dinner-napkin into the likeness of a rabbit, which sprang about his knees and up his arm with an almost supernatural effect. He produced the most delightful music from a finger-glass, three tumblers, and an empty decanter, and was immensely gratified by our detecting it to be 'Rory o' More,' played to psalm-time with a fruit-knife. He became quite purple in the face in consequence of the exertions which he made to toss up three apples in the air consecutively, after the manner of the street-jugglers, and found a brief respite from his labours in the act of cutting up one of them with immense care, throwing the spiral parings over Aunt Tab's head and declaring that the letters which it formed on the floor behind her would be the initials of the gentleman whom she would make happy for life. They happened to alight in the form of P. S., which we, with the charming simplicity and ready wit characteristic of our years, immediately divined to be an omen of her ultimate union with Mr. Peter Slowman, my uncle's butler, a supposition which was fraught with all the greater horror in consequence of that gentleman's devoted attachment to Mrs. Colinder, the cook, down stairs. After everybody's health had been drunk all round, and the conversation was beginning to take a political turn (my uncle was a stanch Tory, and when once he began to discuss the Melbourne administration there was no stopping him), my mother would give a private signal to Aunt Tab and my sisters, who with one consent arose and left the room. Of course we little ones went with them, but instead of ascending to the drawing-room again we used to make a bolt down-stairs to see how Sally was getting on, and how she had liked

her dinner. Sally was our hand-maiden, pretty well stricken in years, and a faithful servant in our nursery ever since we could remember. She had nursed us through measles, hooping-cough, scarlatina, and, in short, all the ills which infant flesh is heir to. I thoroughly believe there is nothing that good creature would not have undergone for our sakes. She had but one foible, and that, considering that we lived in a garrison town was a pardonable one—she was consumed by an unextinguishable passion for marines. I am not prepared to say that she was insensible to the attractions of ‘the line,’ or that if an eligible artilleryman had come in her way she would have treated him with incivility, but marines were her weakness, and she married several: of course I don’t mean at the same time, but in turn. Poor Sally was very unfortunate in her attachments, and had become a widow twice within our recollection; but neither these matrimonial alliances nor the domestic afflictions which followed them interfered with the faithful discharge of her duties to us. For years she reigned supreme in our nursery, and in the case of fraternal quarrels there was no appeal from her decision. Sometimes she asked for a holiday to see her husband embark, or welcome him home from that widely-extended tract of country known as ‘foreign parts,’ or went away for an hour or so to get her pension or another marriage licence; but through all her vicissitudes she remained constant to her trust: and attached as she was to her amphibious lovers, I believe she would have cheerfully relinquished the most attractive marine rather than quit our service. Many a letter have we directed for her according to a model address which she always kept, and from which no orthographical deviation was permitted, until she changed her partner.

Mister corporal John Taylor, exquire
his madgestis ship Harrythewair
lying off Spithedd
or in the Meddytrainsen
or ELSEWHERE.

In this comprehensive superscription, whose chief merit seemed to lie in the wide field of conjecture which it opened to the Post-office authorities, Sally had the most unbounded confidence, declaring that she always ‘have heard tell that it would be sartain sure to find her old man *sometime* hows’ever;’ but as she never prepaid her letters, nor expected any answer until her husband’s ship was paid off, the probability is that Mr. Taylor was spared the trouble of deciphering at least half of her communications. We found Sally, then, after dinner, over a dish of tea with Mrs. Colinder, my uncle’s cook and housekeeper, a middle-aged lady in a black bombazine dress and burnt-umber-coloured wig, who entertained certain theories of a peculiar and exceedingly original system of theology, which she and Sally were never tired of discussing, and which they seemed to have chiefly derived while ‘sitting under’ an eminent dissenting divine by the name of Blenkinsop. This extraordinary expression has I believe since been commonly accepted in its proper sense; but at the time, and owing to our limited acquaintance with modern metaphor, I remember we regarded it in the light of a religious but highly uncomfortable ceremony.

How well I recollect that cosy kitchen with its ample fireplace and complicated roasting-jack of wheels, chains, and pulleys, attached to the wall!—the comfortable old Windsor-chairs, with green-baize cushions, the round table covered with a cloth of the same material, on which Dodd’s Bible lay, bound in rough calf, with ‘The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,’ ‘The Complete Letter-writer,’ and Mrs. Colinder’s tortoiseshell spectacles. Nor can I forget dear old Mouser, a black tom-cat of great antiquity that purred unceasingly upon the hearth, and kindly bore with all our teasing. Across the passage, there was the butler’s pantry too—a chamber which is always associated in my mind with a peculiar perfume of oil of vitriol and candle-ends. Here Peter was wont to sit and peruse odd numbers of the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine,’ and

here, too, he was delighted to receive us and deliver (*sotto voce*) a short and extemporary lecture on the art of button-cleaning—an operation in which he took especial pride, and for which he had invented an ingenious machine, with a vague and foggy notion of ‘taking out a patent for it some of these here fine days.’

After rifling Mrs. Colinder’s circular spice-box, and tasting all its contents from mace to nutmeg, we concentrated our energies in endeavouring to induce Mouser to sup on an infusion of cinnamon and water; and failing in this dietetic experiment, in consequence, as we thought, of the ungenerous interference of Sally, we betook ourselves up-stairs again with an eye to cake and muffins, which formed the simple elements of our next repast. After tea we amused ourselves by inspecting ‘Fox’s Book of Martyrs,’ of which Grampus possessed a very fine copy, illustrated with woodcuts of such an appalling nature in regard to subject, that, aided by the unusually heavy dinner of which we had partaken, it had the ultimate effect of giving us all nightmare, or at least uneasy dreams in which gigantic gridirons, racks, and thumbscrews were called unpleasantly to mind before the morning.

But our great delight, during the latter part of the evening, was to gather round the fire and clamour for a song or a story from Grampus. Of these commodities he possessed, indeed, only a limited stock; but as they were well selected and strictly reserved for these occasions, we listened to them with annually renewed interest. Of the songs, I regret to say, I remember but little. There was a very remarkable one, the end and object of which appeared to be a description of and various suggestions for the definition of a woman. In the course of the chorus—a very lengthy one—the poet compared her to a flower and a tower, a song and a thong, a mill and a pill, a flea and a bee, and a variety of other monosyllabic nouns which it was painfully evident had been selected more with a view to euphony of verse than any actual resemblance of the objects themselves

—in short, in which there was a great deal more of rhyme than reason. There were certain ancient ditties, too, connected with love, libations, and loyalty, of which we only heard fragmentary stanzas, as—

‘Come, let us dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes’ bells shall ring—
Love strikes the fiddle-string,
And Venus plays the lute.
Maidens gay, trip away,
Happy on our wedding-day,’ &c. &c.

OR,

‘The Universe well may be jealous
Of England, where Liberty sings;
For the King is the king of good fellows,
And—all our good fellows are kings.
Foi loi de roi, loi de roi liddle,’ &c. &c.

Under the genial influence of a bowl of ‘rack punch my worthy relative proceeded with the musical entertainment, until he was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which warned him to desist, for he was inclined to be asthmatical, and was, as I have before remarked, of very portly dimensions about the region of the waistcoat. Ten minutes having been then kindly accorded to Grampus in order that he might recover himself (which he did at length after a deal of puffing and blowing and using sundry ejaculations apparently selected from the Litany), it became the duty of my eldest sister Kate to replenish his tumbler—an operation of which he always pretended to deprecate the necessity either by faintly remonstrating with her—placing his hand over the glass in such an ingenious manner that there was ample room for a stream of grog to be poured between his fingers; or suddenly starting up to poke the fire with great energy, he would affect the greatest indignation to find another half-pint of the reeking compound on returning to his arm-chair. Whatever his object may have been in executing these remarkable manoeuvres, one fact is worthy of note, and that is, that he always succeeded in drinking his second allowance of punch. I don’t say it is anything to boast of, but he did it. Whether he would have been prepared for a third—whether he ever *did* take a third after we were all gone—just to

make himself comfortable, you know, before he turned into bed for the night—this, I say, is more than I can tell you, but it was during the second when he always told his story—and so I will confine myself to the fact.

'Are you all ready?' asked Grampus, settling himself into his arm-chair, and taking a sort of preparatory pull at the punch.

'Yes, uncle,' piped a chorus of small voices.

'Well then, once upon a time when—halloa there! stop a minute!' said my uncle, suddenly—'Who's cracking nuts?'

'Only me, uncle,' said Tom, slowly emerging from under the table, where he had taken up his position with a handful of filberts.

'Now look here,' said my uncle, 'just you take the crackers and crack 'em all, *all* mind, will you, before I begin—there's a good boy?' Tom did so. 'That's right,' said my uncle, winking at Tom through the tumbler which he had just raised to his lips; 'that's right. Now we shall get on.' And on he went.

'Once upon a time, and years before you little chickabiddies here were born or thought of, I had occasion to make a journey just after Christmas from P—— to Exeter. Travelling, as I dare say you've been told a dozen times by old fogies like me, was a very different thing then to what it is now—you couldn't step into a train to be whisked off from place to place. If you got over the ground at four or five miles an hour it was thought a very fair speed; so that in winter with two horses we could barely reach Exeter between dawn and dusk. As for London, it took the best part of a week to get there, and no one thought of starting on such a journey without making his will. The "Perseverance" coach had been, up to the time I am speaking of, the only public conveyance, except the waggon, between this and Exeter, and a dilatory ramshackled old concern it was, only running every other day. However, a new Company had just started, undertaking to do the journey every day, and in little more than half the time, with four

horses. This was a step in the right direction, to be sure; but like most attempts at reform, it met with a deal of opposition at first. Old people shook their heads and predicted that no good would come of the innovation. The "Perseverance" had done well enough for them, they said, and they would stick by it. It was better to travel safely than swiftly, and who could say what might be the fate of this new-fangled concern? However, the "Tantivy"—for that was the name of the rival coach—was started, fulfilled its engagements as to speed, and had performed the journey daily for about three weeks, when I was summoned to Exeter on business, and determined to travel by it.

'It was boasted that the "Tantivy" could start from the Red Lion inn at noon, and passing the old "Perseverance" (which used to leave the King's Arms some hours before) on the road, reach Exeter before it. Even at this time of the day, the weather was intensely cold, and I was pleased to think I had secured an inside place. Winters *were* winters in those days, I can tell you. I don't know what's become of 'em now, they seem to have gone out with the stage-coaches. Many's the time when I've found the water in my bedroom jug covered with ice, and my sponge frozen quite hard, morning after morning. If such a thing happens now, people talk of it as if 'twas a wonder. I remember when we took it as a matter of course. Well, when I got down to the inn, I was anxious to see who my fellow-travellers were. That was a much more important and interesting question than it is now. If you get a disagreeable fellow or a squealing infant in a railway-carriage you may change your place now-a-days, but then it was impossible. You had to endure your company, whatever it was. Luckily I found mine pretty decent people—a stout bagman who went to sleep almost the instant he got inside the carriage, and a little middle-aged lady very comfortably wrapped up in a boa, a fur pelisse, and a travelling hood. When I say that she was comfortably wrapped up I am

only referring to her bodily condition. She seemed anything but comfortable in her mind. I thought I never saw such a restless little soul in my life. She was fidgeting about in and out of the coach half a dozen times before we started. Now she wanted to sit with her back to the horses—then on the opposite seat; now she changed corners with the bagman—now with me. When I add to this that she kept popping her head out of the window every two or three minutes and asking the guard the most ridiculous questions about the probabilities of the weather, the state of the roads, and the temper of the horses, you will reasonably infer that I had some doubt of her sanity.

"Law bless you, mum," said the guard, on being interrogated for the third time, "they're as quiet as lambs every one of 'em—as I told you just now. You might drive 'em blindfold a'most and leave your whip at home to be mended; and as for work, I never see such beastesses at the collar—never in my born days: they're wot you may term slap-uppers and no mistake!"

"What is a slap-upper?" asked the little lady, doubtfully.

"Good 'uns to go, mum—no shirking their duty—no jibbing—no shying—no nothing o' vice about 'em as you may say."

"Oh!" said the little lady, somewhat relieved, "I thought you might mean that they kicked. One of them seems a little frisky."

"Which is that, mum? The grey mare, I 'spose, now?"

"Really I don't know!" said the little lady, sharply. "It was one of the front ones."

"Ah! you mean the off leader," said the guard—*yes*—that is the grey mare: she only wants to be off, that's all, mum: a little restless and nervous-like, till she's on the road—similar to many other of her sex, mum," added the guard with a very slight wink at the bagman. "Now, Bill, be you ready? time's up!" cried he to the coachman; "blest if I ever see sich a feller for lush—come on."

"Allright Shtephens, awright myboy," answered a very bloated-

looking man in three or four top-coats and a red belcher handkerchief wound round his neck, just under a redder nose. "Awright Shtephens, I'm acummin, Shtephens," and emptying his glass at the bar door, he slowly, and with apparently some difficulty, climbed up into his seat. Mr. Stephens jumped up behind, and producing a French horn from a leather case which dangled over the side of the coach, performed a series of variations on "Away with Melancholy," as we drove off.

"A very impertinent man, that guard!" exclaimed the little lady to me, when we got outside the town.

"I'm afraid he was rather inclined to be so," said I, as gravely as I could, for the bagman was purple with suppressed laughter. "May I take the liberty, madam, of inquiring whether you are accustomed to travelling in this way? I'm afraid you seemed a little nervous."

"It is because I am accustomed to travel," answered the little lady, "that I *do* feel a little nervous."

"Indeed! and why?" I asked.

"Because," said the little lady, emphatically, and with great deliberation, "I never was in a stage-coach yet in my life which was not upset, that's all."

"If that is really the case, you have indeed been unfortunate," I remarked; "but let us hope you will have better luck to-day."

"We shall meet with an accident, sir, I am convinced," she answered. "Only mark my words. However, I am accustomed to it."

It was in vain the bagman and I tried to reason her out of this melancholy conviction. She remained firmly persuaded of our impending fate, and declared that nothing would induce her to change her mind. This being the case, I naturally thought the next best thing to do was to change the subject; and accordingly we began to talk upon general topics of the day, in which the bagman joined us until he fell asleep, and then we relapsed into silence. Meanwhile, the coach rolled over hill and dale, between hedges bristling with frost, over roads so hard that the horses' hoofs rang

upon them like a blacksmith's hammer. Ice lay an inch thick upon many a ditch and duckpond that we passed; last week's snow still lingered on the distant hills. The leafless trees looked hard and brittle with the cold, and our horses' breath came floating past us in a crisp blue cloud upon the winter air. On we sped through what is, in summer, the most picturesque part of Devonshire, and which even the bleak and gloomy aspect of the weather could not altogether rob of its beauty. We had stopped once or twice to change horses, and it was now getting dusk, when the little lady resumed her apprehensions. The bagman had begun to snore, and I confess I felt a little drowsy myself. Indeed, I think I should have fallen asleep before if they had not been making such a terrible noise outside. There were two or three of them up there on the roof or box, laughing, shouting, and singing, as if they had just escaped from Bedlam. I felt convinced that the driver was one. At every inn we stopped at on the road he had been down and asked for "sixpen'orth of rum and milk;" "liqueur of brandy neat;" "three of gin 'ot;" "small glass of shrub and bitters;" all, doubtless, admirable cordials in their way, if taken singly; but open to objection in their combined effect. However, whether it was that I was too weary to listen, or that their spirits actually did become more subdued at last, I can't say, but the noise seemed gradually to grow fainter and fainter, and then I fell into a deep sleep. How long I remained in this condition I cannot say; but I was in the midst of a long dream, in which I imagined that I had entered into partnership with the late Captain Cook, and was on a voyage of discovery, tossing about on the Atlantic Ocean, in a fearful storm, when the vessel, as I thought, gave a tremendous lurch over, and I was awoke by a shrill voice crying—

"There, sir! I told you how it would be. I knew it from the first—you wouldn't believe me, and now we are——"

The rest of the sentence was lost in a tremendous crash of breaking

timbers and smashed windows, with which, female screams, anathemas from the opposite sex, and the sound of kicking horses, were plentifully mingled.

The little lady was right; we WERE UPSET, and no mistake. It would be quite impossible for me to describe the confusion which ensued. Removing the broken glass as well as I could, I first raised myself up from the coach window and then extricated the little lady.

"My dear madam, are you much hurt?" I asked.

"Oh, sir!" she groaned, pointing to her neck; "look here!" and fainted away in my arms.

Her collar was saturated with blood, and I really was very much alarmed. When we got her inside a neighbouring inn and farmhouse, however, it turned out that beyond a little shaking and a great deal of fright, she had not suffered much. The blood had flowed from the bagman's cheek, which was badly lacerated by broken glass; and begging the farmer's wife to give her a cup of tea, I hastened off to the relief of my less fortunate companion. Luckily, one of the outside passengers was a young surgeon, who immediately strapped up the wound, and rendered all the assistance in his power to the injured.

I am happy to say he was soon able to give a good report of his patients, most of whom had only been bruised. Our coachman, the source of this disaster, was sitting hopelessly drunk on a hedge where he had been pitched. Some one asked how it happened.

"Ah, ole feller!" said the inebriated rascal, shaking his head very solemnly and holding up one finger; "ah, olf—olf eller; you—you want to—to know-too-mush. How'd it happen? howshdino; nofoltomine; thasallinobout it; tol de rol," he continued, looking round with an expression of intense humour on his face; "tol de rol, I wish you all—all merry Krishmas and—and," he added, very solemnly, after a hiccup, "and a appy new year. There now."

This flagrant conduct naturally roused the indignation of the bystanders, some of whom, taking me

aside, informed me that one of the proprietors of the coach had himself sat upon the box-seat and had been drinking with this fellow on the road. He was now in a terrible fright, well knowing that if we brought an action against him, and this fact came out in evidence, it would seriously damage his interests; in fact, might do for the "Tantivy" altogether. He came to me as the senior inside passenger and begged I would use my influence to prevent such a calamity, which he said would ruin him if it got into the papers. He further hinted that he was prepared to offer any reasonable compensation for the affair, and that he had despatched a messenger at once to Exeter for another vehicle, which would be on the spot shortly.

'After a conference with the "fares," to whom I retailed this information, I was empowered to treat with him according to my discretion. The general wish appeared to be that he should be made to pay in some form or another for his neglect, but that as no one except the bagman had been seriously injured, no personal compensation would be exacted.

'It was a little puzzling to know what to do under these circumstances. However, I made up my mind and went back.

'Mr. Bowler, for that was the proprietor's name, received me very graciously, and inaugurated the proceedings by asking me whether I would take anything to drink. I thanked him, but declined his offer.

"Better have something short," urged Mr. Bowler, "after your exertions; I'm sure, sir, I don't know what we should have done without you. I've got a little brandy in this here flask; do 'ave a little—a little drop neat; it won't hurt you."

"It has hurt a good many of us already, Mr. Bowler," said I, rather sternly. "If there had not been so much drinking going on outside the coach, this wouldn't have happened."

'Mr. Bowler looked rather ashamed of himself, and muttered something about a drop too much.

"Mr. Bowler," said I, "there is no doubt that you have been much to blame in this matter, as you

would find out to your cost if we proceeded against you."

"I am painfully aware of the fact, sir," said Mr. Bowler, very humbly; "and if I can do any——"

"My fellow-passengers, I continued, "are unwilling to accept any bribe (here Mr. Bowler's face brightened), but, on the other hand, we think it is but fair that you should make some voluntary sacrifice in a pecuniary form to express your regret, and by way of apology for this occurrence. Do you understand me?"

"Well, not exactly," said Mr. Bowler, after a pause.

"I will endeavour to explain," said I. "In the first place, you are aware that the commercial traveller who was with me inside has been badly cut about the face and otherwise injured. I have reason to believe that he is not in very good circumstances, and this accident may interfere for some time with the discharge of his duties. I wish you distinctly to understand that he has made no claim himself, but I think you cannot do less than beg, under these circumstances, that he will do you the favour of accepting twenty pounds."

'Mr. Bowler signified his assent to this proposition with apparent cheerfulness.

"The rest of us," I continued, "wish that any pecuniary compensation which you may feel it your duty to offer should be bestowed in a direction where you will have the double satisfaction of exercising real charity, while you discharge your obligations to those who have suffered from your negligence."

Mr. Bowler looked puzzled.

"You have doubtless," I said, "heard of the Devon and Cornwall hospital?"

'Mr. Bowler nodded.

"It is an excellent institution, Mr. Bowler," said I, "and well worthy of your notice. You will not, I am sure, have any objection to make it a donation of ten pounds."

'Here Mr. Bowler winced a little, but remarked, if the gentlemen wished to do business that way it was their affair, and the money should be paid.

"Very well," said I. "Now, in the town from which we started this morning there is another charitable institution for the relief of those who are in danger of being deprived of sight. I allude to the Eye Infirmary, with which I am in some degree connected. Allow me, as governor, to put your name down for five guineas."

"Very well, sir, as you like," said Mr. Bowler, testily, and taking up his hat.

"Stop a minute," said I, "I won't detain you much longer; but—have you ever been over the Female Orphan Asylum at P——?"

"No, I have not, sir; and what's more, I——"

"Would like to do so, no doubt," I said. "Very well, any donor of ten guineas——"

"Come, I say," cried Mr. Bowler, who was making a little sum of compound addition in his pocket-book.

"—may have," I continued, without noticing the interruption, "may have that privilege, of which, no doubt, you will be glad to avail yourself. Indeed, what greater pleasure can there be than in seeing so excellent and practical a result arise from one's benevolence? But I beg your pardon, I really was forgetting the soup and blanket societies, and the Dorcas Fund for supplying the poor with coals in winter. You'll subscribe a couple of guineas a-piece to those, won't you?"

"If I do," cried Mr. Bowler, closing up his pocket-book, "If I do, I'm d——"

"Doing no more than what is fair and honourable, and what any gentleman would do under the circumstances; that's what you were going to say, isn't it?" said I.

"Well, not *exactly*," said Mr. Bowler. "You see——"

"You see," said I, "it would be such an uncommonly disagreeable thing to have this matter taken up legally by any of the passengers and so get into the papers, wouldn't it?"

"All right," exclaimed Mr. Bowler, suddenly reopening his pocket-book; "anything more in that line? name your terms."

"Nothing else, thank you," I answered, "except to beg that you will discharge that driver for the sake of public safety, and (if I may be permitted to say so) be yourself more temperate in future for your own. As soon as you have remitted those sums to the several societies which I mentioned, you shall have a receipt in full. Good-evening."

"Good-evening, sir," said Mr. Bowler, emphasizing the adjective as if he was determined not to be outdone in civility.

After a short interval, during which I prevailed upon the little lady (who had by this time recovered from her fright) to take some refreshment, the messenger who had been despatched for assistance returned with a carriage and pair. Into this vehicle most of the passengers stowed themselves—the rest following in a cart with the luggage. We reached Exeter late at night, and you may be sure were glad to get comfortably to bed. The next morning, Mr. Bowler kept his promise faithfully, and finding this to be the case, we fulfilled our part of the contract by saying as little about the accident as possible. The affair was hushed up. The "Tantivy" continued to run under the guidance of a steadier charioteer, and I made a point of travelling by it whenever I went up to Exeter.

"And what became of the little lady?" asked Tom, who had listened with great attention to the narrative.

"Upon my word," said Grampus, "that is more than I can tell you. I never saw her from that day to this; but I question very much whether she ventured in a stage-coach again."

At this moment, Peter entered the room to say that my Aunt Tab's sedan-chair had arrived, together with two flies which were to convey our party home. We therefore rose to put on our coats and wrappers, went through the usual form of salutation with my uncle, and drove home over the white, crisp snow, to dream of the "Tantivy" and its passengers. So ended our Christmas with Grampus.

JACK EASEL.

Types of English Beauty.

V.—ROSE.

ONLY dear old England
 Boasts such maids as Rosie;
 Eyes that drowse with dreamy splendour,
 Cheeks with roseleaf-tintings tender,
 Lips a fragrant posy.
 I would barter years of youth
 For the kisses of her mouth.
 Of those nut-brown tresses,
 One lock would she yield me,
 On my faithful heart reposing,
 All my life long till its closing,
 'Twould from sorrow shield me.
 Though she binds them in a snood,
 See how wanton winds have wooed!
 Darling English maiden!
 With your pure, frank beauty,
 (There's no treachery in that dimple)—
 Honest, as your dress is simple,
 Loyal to each duty;
 He, whose wife you shall become,
 Shall have sunshine in his home!
 Oh, your smiles are magic,—
 Moonlight on life's ocean;
 As the pale moon sways the waters,
 So the love of England's daughters
 Rules our fond devotion.
 Mothers, sweethearts, wives like you,
 Make our hearts so stanch and true!
 Type of English beauty,
 Trusting, true, and tender!
 Be it lofty, be it lowly,
 Every English fireside holy
 Your rare virtues render:
 Love of that fair face of yours,
 England's liberty secures.

THE STORY OF THEKLA,

FROM SCHILLER'S 'WALLENSTEIN.'—(Illustrated.)

AMONGST Schiller's ballads 'The Maiden's Lament' differs in style and tone from the others. Schiller is not generally musical in his lyric vein, and but few of his poems invite the composer. This one, however, in its simplicity of feeling and its dramatic contrasts between the suffering child and the departed mother, who comforts her from the celestial regions, is musical even in

a high degree, and so the poet intended it to be. The two first staves are sung to the guitar in the poet's greatest drama by Wallenstein's daughter Thekla. In the blooming spring of her love with Max Piccolomini she forebodes the tragic shadow that will overcast the bright sky of her young life. She perceives the cruel play with her feelings on the part of her aunt, the Countess



THOMAS G. FINE, ENGRAVER.

OFFICE OF ENGLISH ARTISTS.



Drawn by Lucy Meadows.

TYPES OF ENGLISH BEAUTY.

See of "Kane."

Terzky, who from political motives fosters a love which she well knows will never be crowned by a happy union. It seems that Schiller afterwards added the two last verses to complete the poem, and thus placed it with his other ballads in the edition of lyric poems, under the title of

The Maiden's Lament.

[The first two stanzas of this poem are sung by *Thékla*, in the Third Act of the *Piccolomini*.]

The oak-wood is waving,
The clouds gather o'er;
There sitteth a maiden
Beside the green shore;
The breakers are dashing with might—with might:
And she sighs out aloud in the gloomy night,
And weeping, thus walleth she—
'My heart it is broken,
The world is a void,
Nothing more can it give me,
For hope is destroyed.
All the bliss that the earth can bestow I have proved;
Heavenly Father—Oh! take—I have lived—I have loved—
Oh! take back thy child to thee.
'The tears that thou weep'st;
Must vainly be shed;
For no sorrow awakens
The sleep of the Dead!
Yet say, what can solace and comfort the breast,
When it mourns for the love by which once it was blest,
And the balm shall descend from above.
'Let the tears I am weeping
Still vainly be shed,
Though my sorrow can wake not
The sleep of the Dead;
Yet all that can solace and comfort the breast,
When it mourns for the love by which once it was blest,
Are the tears and the sorrow of love.'

Translated by Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, Bart.

Of all the great historical dramas of Schiller, 'Wallenstein' is the most admired. Being well versed in the history of modern Europe, and living at a time when the French Revolution and the subsequent events revealed the heart of man, and taught politics on a grand scale, Schiller

was enabled to discover the most stirring subjects which the history of modern Europe offers to the tragedian. It will be found that in every one of his historical plays he just hits upon the turning point in the destiny of some great people, and each of the leading nations in Europe has thus furnished him with a plot. From the history of Germany no better subject for a dramatic work could be selected than the life and death of Wallenstein. This great commander of the imperial troops, during the Thirty Years' War, constitutes quite an epoch in the destinies of the people of Germany. Through that war the bond was broken, which during the middle ages, and even through the Reformation, had kept the limbs of the mighty empire together; and as Wallenstein, partly through his own guilt, failed in restoring the central power of the emperor over the many principalities, it was from his time that Germany went to pieces, and, instead of a compact nation, became a weak aggregate of petty states. The character of Wallenstein is in itself essentially dramatic. He was still alive in the memory of Schiller's coevals, as many a destroyed village in Germany, even now, bears frightful testimony to the ravages caused by that suicidal civil war. At the same time the crime of treason, of which Wallenstein was accused by his imperial antagonists, and for which he was doomed to an inglorious death from the hands of assassins, lies still shrouded in mystery; and there is even now a difference of opinion as to the question whether he really intended betraying his master, and through a secret alliance with Sweden and the Protestants in Germany, hoped to obtain for himself the crown of Bohemia, and, at the same time, peace for his country; or whether the court of Vienna, fearing his immense power at the head of an irresistible army, burdened him with the crime of treason in order to justify the most atrocious treachery on their own part. Thus the dramatist was not too closely fettered by evidence, and might deal with the facts more freely than a more modern subject

* This line is misunderstood by the translator. It ought to be:

Oh! mother in heaven—I have lived, I have loved,
Oh, take back thy child to thee!

would have allowed him to do. Although Wallenstein may hardly be called a poetical character, yet his immense influence on his age, and the sudden turn in his fortunes, will ever lend to him a deep dramatic interest. The poet has taken great care to show us this character, and lay bare all the roots from which his overwhelming authority rose. Casting the whole subject in a trilogy, it is in the first short play, under the title of 'Wallenstein's Camp,' that he shows us the strong hold of the great commander on the souls of the private soldiers and non-commissioned officers whom he had called from the plough, the counting-house, or the schoolroom; and by wielding them into an irresistible armed body, had made them the arbiters of the nation's fate. In the second play, entitled, 'The Piccolomini,' we are made to feel his influence on the officers, whom he had chosen from all countries of Europe, to be the servants of his will and the companions of his martial glory. In the third play, which bears the title of 'The Death of Wallenstein,' he himself comes before us in all the formidable array of his mental powers, and armed with all that faith in himself and confidence in his star which is even strengthened by his firm belief in astrology. And yet, having to deal with all these energetic agencies, Schiller must have felt that the subject of his great work was prominently political, and that something was wanting in it without which the greatest theatrical effect can never be secured. To say it in one word, much as this struggle for power may occupy our mind, our heart feels but little interest in it. Hence the poet thought it necessary to lend an additional charm to his plot by drawing upon the storehouse of his abundant invention. He made the edge of separation, which divided the political parties, to cut also through two young and noble hearts. To Wallenstein he gave a daughter, the heiress of his fortune and his expectations, and bound her in fatal love

to Max Piccolomini, the son of Wallenstein's most cunning, most treacherous, and most destructive enemy. Neither of these two characters exist in history, for Octavio Piccolomini, who in the play is the presumed father of Max, was at the time still a young man, being but thirty-five years old when Wallenstein died; and although Wallenstein had a daughter of his second marriage (whose name, by the way, was not Thekla, but Mary Elizabeth), she was only about fourteen years old at her father's death. The introduction of such fictitious characters in a play which otherwise closely clings to history, may not stand before the verdict of the critic; but Schiller obtained his aim fully—for it is to these two parts that his work owes its great popular success. Max is placed in a conflict between Love and Duty, which drags his noble soul into unavoidable destruction, and Thekla, renouncing him, that his honour may not be sullied, rises to a height of character which shows us the noblest aim of tragedy, the glorification of personal liberty of decision in the midst of the most heart-rending conflicts, to which we may be doomed by merciless Fate.

The engraving in our present number, referring to Thekla's song, is taken from the beautiful photographs after drawings designed by some of the best German artists of the day, which accompany the new edition of Schiller's poems. The plan of this edition was formed by the celebrated firm of Cotta, on occasion of the centenary celebration of the poet's birthday, in 1859, and it has just been finished in a superior style, being one of the finest specimens of continental typography and ornamentation. The artist has not adhered to the costume of the time of Wallenstein, but dressed his weeping maiden in rather a modern and elegant attire; a liberty with which we are not inclined to find fault, seeing that the poem is of a universal character, and does not attach itself to any limited period in history.



THE MATHENS LAMENT.

See "The Story of Robin."

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to Max Piccolomini, the son of Wallenstein's most cunning, most treacherous, and most destructive enemy. Neither of these two characters exist in history, for Octavio Piccolomini, who in the play is the presumed father of Max, was at the time still a young man, being but thirty-five years old when Wallenstein died; and although Wallenstein had a daughter of his second marriage (whose name, by the way, was not Thokla, but Mary Elizabeth), she was only about seventeen years old at her father's death. The introduction of such fictitious characters in a play which otherwise closely clings to history, may not stand before the verdict of the critic; but Schiller obtained his aim fully—for it is to these two years that his work owes its chief dramatic success. Max is given to a passionate love and duty, which drags his noble soul into unavoidable destruction, and Thokla, renouncing him, that his honour may not be sullied, rises to a height of character which shows us the noblest aim of tragedy, the glorification of personal liberty of decision in the midst of the most heart-rending conflicts, to which we may be doomed by merciless Fate.

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THE MAIDEN'S LAMENT.

See "The Story of Thalia."

THE ORDEAL FOR WIVES.

A Story of London Life.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE MORALS OF MAYFAIR.'

CHAPTER I.

AT SWINDON.

'WHAT is the supposed origin of ladies' carriages, Miss Bates? They are a time-honoured institution, of course; but in these days one likes to know more about things than that they exist—one likes derivations. What are ladies' carriages derived from, and what is their supposed object?'

'My dear Miss Dashwood—I really—so very amusing!'

'Milly, listen to Miss Bates "On Ladies' Carriages." She says, *imprimis*, they are amusing.'

'My dear, I mean't nothing of the kind. I mean't, you know, that they are very proper—'

'And you separate the two ideas? You think that nothing that is right can be pleasant. Oh, Miss Bates, Miss Bates, what a fast person you are growing! How fearfully the last four years have degenerated you!'

'What spirits!' was Miss Bates's response to this little attack upon her character; 'what charming spirits dear Miss Dashwood continued to enjoy! just as full of life and fun as ever!' And then, the last bell having rung, Miss Bates insisted upon getting into the carriage once more to kiss all her dear young friends before their departure; and, finally, in the forgetfulness of affection, was very near being locked in, and borne away with them in the express train—an accident which all her very dear young friends seemed remarkably anxious to prevent.

'She means well, I believe,' said Milly Dashwood, as they caught the last sight of the Bates struggling wildly among a crowd of porters upon the platform of the Paddington terminus. 'She means well, but she is very unpleasant. Oh, how glad I am to be free from her!'

'She is detestable,' said Jane, curtly. 'I hate her—as she hates

me! That is right, Miss Fleming, open the windows on both sides. We have need of a good fresh draught upon us after all the Bates' kisses!' And here Miss Dashwood threw her hat off with visible impatience at the mere recollection of her friend's caresses, and held her face to the open window, through which the summer morning wind was blowing freshly.

It was a lovely face! I speak advisedly; for few faces are lovely in real life; but hers undoubtedly was so. Such brilliant colouring! such abundance of dark fine hair! such liquid hazel eyes! I don't think there was anything at all in the expression of the features, collectively, that charmed you as you looked at her. You thought of eyes and lips and blooming cheeks alone. I am quite sure you read nothing whatever of beauty of mind or soul, as one does in romance, upon Jane Dashwood's face. You were quite content with the beauty of the outward material, without going deeper, or seeking for the exact inward charms she did not possess; and at this moment, when I first introduce her to you, dressed in a simple rose-coloured muslin, and with the broad June morning resting full upon her faultlessly pure complexion, she formed, altogether, about as favourable a type of a fair young Englishwoman in the freshness of her first maturity as you would meet, or desire to meet with anywhere.

Her sister Millicent at her side was also pretty, *mignonne*, and delicate—even more frailly delicate than Jane—but with less perfect features—perhaps with a somewhat sweeter and less restless expression than her elder sister. At the few balls to which Milly had ever been (she was only seventeen, and yesterday was a school-girl), she had had

quite as many partners as Miss Dashwood, and had, on the whole, been better liked by the men who danced with her. Jane was beautiful enough to give herself royal airs, and took full advantage of the prerogative. Millicent was only pretty enough to be shy and coaxing and good-tempered, with, at times, a slight dash of wilfulness flavouring the good-temper: but Milly found these subjective charms quite as powerful in their way as Jane's objective ones, and she was not only thoroughly unenvious of her sister's superior beauty, but, possessed of the conviction—as deep down in her mind as Milly's little mind had depth—that she would, one day or another, rule quite as triumphantly over a limited empire of her own as Jane, in all the pride of her beauty and arrogance and one-and-twenty years, was reigning over hers now.

This empire, reader, did not extend over the very first London society, of which the Dashwood girls knew nothing, but over that outlying and somewhat mouldering province of fashion, Bath, where their father, Colonel Dashwood, had been a shining light during the last twenty years. Jane had now been staying a fortnight in town with distant relatives to see the exhibitions, for which she cared nothing, and to go to see one or two operas, for which she cared a great deal: Jane Dashwood assisted a very little, you see, in white silk and jasmine-wreath, at the latter entertainments, not at all at the former ones. And she was this day chaperoning Milly home to Bath, that young person's apprenticeship at the finishing establishment of Miss Bates, Kensington Gravel Pits, having just expired.

'Yes, you are finished, Milly,' Jane remarked, when her indignant recollection of Miss Bates had had time to cool. 'Poor little Milly, of seventeen, finished! I never kissed you before Miss Bates, child; I couldn't. Let me look at you. Milly, dear, I think you look stronger than you used to do,' and Jane put her arms round her, and kissed her with one of those long, silent caresses that she never

bestowed upon any living being but her sister. 'Milly, we shan't be parted any more now.'

'And I shall have to learn nothing more, Jane. I hate learning!'

'So did I, Milly. I had seven years of it—you have only had four.'

'But you were clever. You could win prizes and make progress.'

'And enemies, Milly. Now I dare say you have had some real friends at school. I never had one.'

'I have Esther,' said Milly, glancing at their young companion, who had betaken herself to the farther compartment of the carriage. 'Esther is worth a dozen common friends. I like her better than any one in the world but you, Jane, although I've only known her six months. She is so clever—did my exercises like a key, and mended my stockings most beautifully, every other thread—but not pretty, Jane, eh?'

'She is distinguished-looking,' replied Miss Dashwood, who, like all unequivocally handsome women, could afford, at times, to be generous; 'pretty is not a word for her. She has just that *air noble* which papa is always trying to impress upon our minds as so essentially aristocratic—as though little things like you and me, Milly, could be statuesque, if we tried.'

'Oh, papa!' repeated Milly, the parental image evidently coming before her mind for the first time. 'Papa—how is he?—I quite forgot to ask—and mamma?'

'Much as usual,' answered Jane, shortly. 'Philanthropy and nerves, title-hunting and polemical tea-parties: the old routine of our house, Milly, from which I, as of old, escape as much as usual.'

'Where to, Jane? Who are your dear, intimate friends at present? What have I got to look forward to?'

'I have no friends at all,' answered Miss Dashwood. 'I never do have any; and I shall want them less than ever now that I have got you back, Milly. But I am usefully intimate with one or two young women of my own age, and

in their society I walk about the streets in winter and the park in summer. *You know!* Then in the winter old Mrs. Blantyre took me to the balls, when papa was laid up with the gout, and in the summer young Mrs. Strangways has promised to take us both to the archery-meetings and the subscription pic-nics.

'What! the Mrs. Strangways you used to dislike so?'

'The same,' said Jane, with a somewhat hard laugh; 'and with the same amiable feelings still going on between us! She is a capital chaperon, Milly. Young married women always are—particularly when they dislike one very heartily.'

'I can understand that,' replied Milly, after giving the subject sufficient attention to grapple duly with its mysteries. 'If they take you they amuse themselves, and let you do exactly as you like, of course. But why does a woman like Mrs. Strangways care to be troubled with you at all, Jane?'

'Because new lights may bring back old worshippers to the neglected shrine, because a little stray incense—oh, Milly, darling, don't let's talk of these people now! You will learn enough of such tactics as Mrs. Strangways' without my teaching you! Do you know, child, your hair has grown darker? I am quite positive it has. I wonder whether Mrs. Dashwood will see it.'

And Miss Dashwood stroked down her sister's hair with loving hands, looking into its texture and colour with something of that close, long scrutiny with which children's hair and cheeks and eyes are scrutinized when they come back to their mother, grown and altered, after every six months' absence at school.

'Fancy Mrs. Dashwood thinking of such earthly vanities as a shade of difference in my tawny locks!' cried Milly. 'Papa, of course, would like to see the article "daughter" [generally improved and more marketable, but no one on earth besides you, Jane, ever feels any concern about me or my looks when I come and go. Luckily, it does not break my heart! I really wonder sometimes whether I

have much feeling or not. Oh, Jane, talking of feelings, where is Paul?'

'Milly!'

'Oh, never mind Esther—Esther knows nothing about it, and if she did it wouldn't signify. Don't be angry, Jenny. If I thought you really cared about him I should have said nothing, but as you are only——'

'Only engaged to him it does not matter,' cried Miss Dashwood, with her short laugh. 'Miss Fleming, what nonsense has Milly been telling you about me?'

'Only nonsense, I am sure,' answered a calm, sonorous voice, singularly different in its ring and cadence to the Dashwoods'. 'I should be sorry to believe it anything else.'

'Oh, you dear, steady, severe old Esther!' cried Miss Milly. 'Please don't be so like Miss Bates on the first day of our freedom. I feel the prison-chill steal over me again when you come out with those awful moral sentiments—"I should be sorry to believe it anything else." Really it seemed like Miss Bates in person, didn't it, Jane?'

'I think no two human beings in the world could be so unlike as Miss Fleming and the Bates,' said Jane, quickly. 'If I were any judge of such matters I should say that I think both you and I, Milly, have a great many more Bates qualities than Miss Fleming has. Miss Bates is worldly; so are we; yes, Milly, dear, even you, in spite of your blue eyes and your seventeen years: Miss Bates's life is acting, every hour of it; so is ours: Miss Bates has only one object—to seem what she is not; our ambition, directed into another channel, is the same. She is odious and we are delightful, certainly; but these are adventitious conditions beyond our own control. At heart——'

'We are both of us selfish, sordid, wicked, worldly hypocrites,' interrupted Milly, laughing. 'How I do like to hear you in your sudden fits of repentance, Jenny. Come over here, Esther,' she added, turning to her friend, 'and hear Miss Dashwood holding forth on our

family virtues. Don't be shy—oh, I forgot! I have not introduced you. Jane, Esther. Esther, Jane. What a colour you have got, Mistress Fleming, with holding your face outside the window all this time. You don't look very much like Miss Bates, I must confess.'

Not very like, certainly; Miss Bates being parchment-hued, withered, forty-five; Esther Fleming fresh, full of life and health, and only just eighteen. Still Jane Dashwood had been right in applying the qualified terms 'noble' and 'distinguished-looking' to Miss Fleming's style of beauty. Handsome though she was when you came to know her face by heart, not two persons out of a hundred would have hesitated, at first sight, to pronounce her face inferior in good looks to either of the Dashwood girls. She had, as Milly told her, a colour at this moment, but ordinarily she was pale; and colour is after all the standard commonplace criterion of beauty. Then she possessed none of the little piquant graces that formed so many charms in the Dashwood girls. She was rather large, and decidedly strongly built: and beside their two little fragile figures you would inevitably have been possessed, during the first ten minutes or so, with the idea that she was not perfectly refined. With good room to study the three young women in—an open moorland, say, with sky for roof and heather for carpet—you must soon have reversed your first judgment; for every line in Esther's well-grown frame was duly proportioned; finer far, in fact, than the Dashwoods'. Her hands had the brown healthy look of hands that have lived much out of doors, but they were not too large for her size, and in shape were perfect as a gipsy's, while the Dashwoods' hands were only short-fingered, and small, and white. Her walk—on the moor, mind, I don't mean in a ball-room—was free and stately as a Tyrol peasant girl's. The Dashwood's paces were good as far as they went, but they were paces still. Then Esther Fleming's head was small and admirably formed, and this is a beauty possessed by not

one otherwise handsome English-woman in a hundred. Her hair was fairer by many shades than you would have expected from her dark clear skin; brown waving hair, growing golden almost in a very full light. Her face—no, I will leave that alone; all descriptions of faces are a mistake. I may tell you of a cheek serene and clear, of black-grey eyes, of a delicate firm-cut mouth; I can never bring the living Esther Fleming herself one whit nearer to you. You will not see her smile, half shy, half serious; you will not see the expression of her loving thoughtful eyes, with all my catalogue of charms. Read, instead, the expression of the face that you were enamoured of when you first left school, and you will see before you a more loveable heroine than any that words of mine can by any possibility set forth.

'This is the wild woman of the woods that I have written to you about,' said Milly, addressing her sister, and possessing herself school-girl like, of Miss Fleming's hand. 'Doesn't she look as if she had lived in the wilds of Exmoor all her life? Esther, what do you think of Jane?' 'Your sister is like you, Milly, but—'

'Prettier. Of course; I have heard that since I was a baby, and have quite left off being jealous. That brings us round—I don't know by what road—to Paul again. Don't try to blush, Jenny; where is he?'

'Mr. Chichester is in Bath,' Jane replied; 'or rather, he was there when I left. He never stays more than two or three days at a time. I can't think what in the world makes him come there at all.'

'But does he really visit at our house, Jane?'

'Of course.'

'Whenever he comes to Bath?'

'Yes, I believe so.'

'Then it is a positive engagement. Oh, Jane, and you never told me! When is it to be?'

'Never, Milly, if by "it" you mean my marriage with Mr. Chichester.'

'Yet you are engaged, with Papa's consent!'

'Yes, that is the thing,—with

papa's consent,' said Miss Dashwood, with emphasis; 'I am looked upon for the time being as settled, and am accorded leave to be at peace, sometimes even to refuse a ball if I like it. Oh, Milly, it gives the whole house such a strange air of repose, this little dream about Mr. Chichester. Papa actually allowed himself an attack of the gout last winter. Fancy his succumbing to such a weakness if he had had a disengaged daughter upon his hands!'

'As he will have now, Jane,' said Milly, after some consideration. 'I believe—only I don't like to think even you so cruel—that you are letting this engagement go on simply to mystify papa, and be at rest yourself.'

Jane Dashwood laughed. 'It is a good piece of strategy, is it not, Milly? Peace and freedom for the present, relief for the parental mind, and if everything else fails, Paul to fall back upon at the last. I don't believe he has a farthing in the world, but as soon as it entered into my head to be engaged to him—Mrs. Strangways was trying to take him up, and it amused me to assist her—I got one or two obedient little birds of mine to whisper into papa's ear that he is to have eight hundred a year when some fabulously old person shall die. And so, nous voilà!'

'And Mr. Chichester?' cried Esther, aghast with horror at hearing things which she held so sacred desecrated in such fashion. 'Mr. Chichester—what of him?'

'Oh, he is not ill-looking,' said Jane, calmly, 'and yet not strictly handsome. Dark, slight, rather grizzled hair, eyes that see a great deal farther into one's thoughts than is agreeable, and a by no means good-tempered mouth. For the rest, one could wish of course that he had a large prospective income; still, eight hundred a year, with management, is not so bad.'

'But his feelings!' cried Esther, who could not hide her indignation at such alarming levity. 'His feelings; do they go quite for nothing?'

'Most entirely and absolutely for nothing,' said Jane. 'I see you are

not of the world, Miss Fleming. You believe that men die, as young ladies are represented to do in novels, from blighted affection. It is an exploded belief, I assure you. Nobody dies from any other than strictly material causes in these days. If Mr. Chichester were here I should talk in the same way that I am doing now, and he wouldn't mind it in the least.'

'He must have strange ideas of honour, then,' thought Esther; 'a strange kind of reverence for the woman he means to make his wife.' Then aloud, 'You must make allowance for the ignorance of my questions, Miss Dashwood. I begin to see that I belong to a generation gone by. I have never lived out of a country village till the last six months. I know nothing of love matters. I know nothing of the world.'

'Nor need you wish to do so, Miss Fleming,' said Jane, quickly. 'Nor, if you were thrown on the world, would you ever be what Milly and I are now. We have had unusual advantages from our cradles, and, with great natural aptitude, have improved them to the uttermost. I am twenty-one, Milly is seventeen, and we are both as entirely free from all youthful foolish extravagances in the way of sentiment as though we were middle-aged women. Are we not, Milly?'

'I know that I have got a most youthful desire for food, at all events,' replied Miss Millicent; 'and also that I am delighted to look forward to the prospect of Swindon. What shall we have, Jenny?—sau-sage-rolls or Bath buns, or both?'

'I never eat in the morning,' said Miss Dashwood, languidly. 'What a school-girl you are, Milly.'

'But it will be one o'clock when we get to Swindon,' remarked Esther, apologetically. 'One o'clock—dinner time—and Milly and I have had nothing since eight.'

'And then only a Bates' breakfast,' added Milly. 'It's all very well for you, a come-out young lady, to be so grand, Jenny. Esther and I are not at all above being hungry.'

Accordingly, when the train stopped at Swindon, these two

young persons got out, and with the eagerness of veritable school-girls made their way to the pastry, Miss Dashwood remaining alone in a dignified manner in the carriage. She was a great deal too *blasé* to care for eating at one o'clock; perhaps the admiring looks her pretty face attracted from the crowded platform formed sustenance of a more easily assimilated nature than Bath buns. At all events she bore all scrutiny with the most perfectly unruffled coolness, leaning her head back so that her brown hair and delicate profile came out in excellent relief against the dark cushions of the carriage, and seemed unusually well satisfied and complacent when the two other girls returned.

'One sausage-roll, two Bath buns, a raspberry-tart, and a pint of strawberries,' Milly enumerated, taking these little refreshments one by one out of her bag, 'that is my lunch. Esther the same; but sandwiches instead of *saucissons*. Oh, Jenny, how dreadful it must be to be a used-up victim of society like you, or a heroine in a novel, in neither of which capacities is hearty eating allowed. Then we have had an adventure, too; haven't we, Esther? Jenny missed more than Bath buns by insisting on being grand.'

'An adventure at Swindon must be so thrilling,' remarked Miss Dashwood. 'The accessories are all of such a romantic nature; fat old gentlemen swearing at their boiling soup, fast young Oxonians calling for their morning beer, nurses wildly entreating the pert waiting-girls for bottles of milk, frenzied single women imploring the guard to listen to them, or choking themselves on bad pastry in their fear of being left behind.'

'To neither of which class did he belong,' interrupted Milly. 'Did he, Esther?'

Miss Fleming thought 'he' might have been an Oxonian; but he certainly was not drinking beer, at least not then.

'And pray who is "he"?' asked Jane, with sovereign contempt. 'Which of your numerous acquaintance have you met with, Milly?'

'No acquaintance at all, Jane, but

an exceedingly gentlemanly interesting-looking person. You shall not put down our adventure in that envious and malignant way.'

'And what did the interesting gentleman with whom you are not acquainted say to you, Milly?'

'It was to Esther.'

'I was trying to make my way to the counter, and the people pushed me back,' said Miss Fleming, with a decided accession of colouring in her face, 'and a tall man who stood near us asked me if he could help me.'

'And Esther said "yes," in her simple way, Jenny, and he made room for us. Wasn't it thoughtful of him?'

'And is that all?'

'All why, would you have a stranger do more, Jane? I say it was most attentive. And then he was so thoroughly gentlemanly in his manner.'

'So interesting!' cried Miss Dashwood, with her little mocking laugh. 'How angry I am with myself for having missed this Swindon Bayard.'

'Interesting is a dreadful word to apply to any man,' Esther remarked with deliberation. 'It makes one think of white hands, and hair parted like a girl's, and a lisp.'

'None of which our stranger possessed,' cried Millicent. 'He was a great broad-shouldered man, with a sunburnt face and hands. Much too manly-looking for your style, Jenny; you like—'

'Eat another of those saffron lumps of indigestion, Milly dear,' interrupted Miss Dashwood, 'and don't chatter. I shall have to chaperon you with more care if you take up these sudden fancies for attentive strangers.'

'Don't be frightened, Jane; he never thought of me at all—never looked at me, I believe. The whole of the attention was to Esther, who received it just as coolly as she is now eating her strawberries. I never saw any one with undeniable teeth smile so rarely as Esther does.'

'Smile! why, Milly, you would not have had me smile at a strange young man for an act of common civility! I thanked him sufficiently, I believe.'

'Quite sufficiently, I am sure,' remarked Miss Dashwood, looking closely at Esther. 'He was, no doubt, some excellent young Wiltshire farmer going down to a pig-fair, if there are such things, and—'

'No,' interrupted Miss Fleming, quite firmly, although she smiled. 'The stranger was a gentleman, Miss Dashwood.'

'With black hands and high shoulders.'

'With brown hands and broad shoulders. A manly-looking young Englishman.'

'A true descendant of the Vikings,' interrupted Milly.

'Say it out, Esther. One of your favourite muscular heroes, all sinews and high principles.'

'Of which I could form such admirable judgment while I waited for my change,' said Esther, with a hearty laugh. 'I think we had better give up our adventure, hero and all, Milly. Your sister is only drawing us out in order to make us feel how thoroughly ridiculous we have been afterwards.'

'No,' said Jane, quite gravely. 'I was thinking—thinking how oddly such chance meetings do sometimes turn out. You may meet this stranger some day, and know him, Miss Fleming.'

'As you met Arthur Peel,' interrupted Milly. 'It was in a railway carriage you first saw each other, wasn't it? And then you stayed with him in the same house, and then it all came on—'

'Milly!'

Millicent Dashwood was never conspicuously watchful of any feelings or sufferings save her own; but the moment she caught sight of her sister's face now, she became sensible that her last light words had taken effect too deep. Miss Dashwood's cheeks were burning red, her lips quivering.

'Do think of what you say, Milly,' she remarked, very low. 'You are so heedless.'

'But Esther knows nothing about Arthur Peel, Jenny. I never mentioned it before; and besides, it's all off now.'

'Milly,' cried Miss Dashwood, passionately, 'I beg you will be

silent. I do not choose these jests—they are in bad taste.' And moving abruptly to the other side of the carriage, she leaned her hot face towards the open window and quite away from her two companions' scrutiny.

Millicent went on silently with her luncheon: Esther mused.

'It is good fun to laugh at the man to whom one is engaged,' she thought; 'but bad taste even to speak of some love affair that is "all off," and about which one blushes crimson. How glad I am that I know nothing of the world!'

'It came to grief about money, and papa would not hear of it,' whispered Milly; 'and Jane liked him awfully—that's all. Don't look so solemn, Esther.'

'Milly, I am sorry for your sister.'

'Sorry for her? sorry for our proud, handsome Jane? She would not thank you for pitying her.'

But Millicent was mistaken. Miss Dashwood caught the meaning of Esther's low, kind words, and she turned round quickly with an altered and a softened expression on her flushed face.

'You pity me, Miss Fleming,' she said. 'You are right—I need it. How glad I should be to meet you again!' she went on, after waiting a minute or two, during which Esther made no response. 'I am sure we should get on together in time. You don't think so, Miss Fleming: your face speaks for you. You don't think you would care for any further acquaintance with such an unprincipled heartless character as mine?'

'I never thought anything like that,' said Esther shyly, for the girl, in truth, was quite unused to any sudden demonstrations of violent attachment. 'I think it is impossible for people who have only just met to say whether they will get on together or not on further acquaintance.'

'So like our dear, wise, old Esther!' cried Milly. 'You see you can't steal her from me, Jane. She is my own particular friend, and means to continue so. We shall write each other two long, crossed letters a week all the summer, and

in the winter meet in Bath, and be Damon and Pythias again, as we were at school.'

'Young ladies' friendships being famed for their powers of endurance,' remarked Miss Dashwood, who had quickly rallied from her passing touch of sentiment, 'I prophesy that in six weeks the letters will have died a natural death, and that by the winter you will have forgotten each other.'

'Not so bad as that, I think,' said Esther; 'I never forget any one.'

'What a disagreeable faculty,' remarked Jane, carelessly. 'The great secret of happiness in life is to forget everybody, except those who happen to be amusing one for the moment. Milly, dear, it is time to begin hunting out our thousand and one parcels. That wretched Bates stuffed them with her own hands into every impossible place she could think of.'

'And nothing makes papa so cross as to see heaps of things being showered upon him out of a railway carriage,' said Milly. 'It spoils the tableau of re-union. Esther, by the way, I predict that you will fall desperately in love with Colonel Dashwood the moment you see him: all young ladies do.'

And Milly was right. When Colonel Dashwood came up to meet his daughters at the Bath Station, Miss Fleming thought him the most perfectly charming old man she had ever seen in her life. It was quite impossible that a *père noble* with such a benevolent, silvery head, and who exclaimed, 'My children!' in a voice of such honest, heartfelt emotion, could have a single mean, false, or worldly attribute in his whole composition.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE COACH-BOX.

The intelligent reader must clearly see that Esther Fleming had possessed few of those educational advantages which, in this generation, make most young persons so profoundly versed in life long before the time that they are eighteen. The Shibboleth of girls like the Dash-

woods was, for the most part, unintelligible to her; and what she did understand of it was little to her taste. Nearly all the eighteen years of her life had been passed in a remote village in one of the wildest parts of North Devonshire; and, until the last six months, she had been profoundly ignorant even of the rudiments of ordinary young-lady knowledge. I don't by this mean that she was uneducated: she had, on the contrary, read fewer, and understood more, books than ninety-nine 'finished' young women out of a hundred. She was thoroughly competent in household work; she could use her needle; she had learnt facts, at first hand, concerning all the common things of nature. She was well-educated, if by education one means the process that is to fit, not unfit, young persons for the life that lies before them. But in showy, superficial accomplishments—in knowledge, so called, of the world—she was, as Milly Dashwood often declared, deplorably, heathenishly deficient. She had never been to a ball; she did not know the financial difference between elder and younger sons; she had honest, romantic, old-fashioned notions (poor Esther!) about people always being in love with the people they married; she had never read any French book but 'Telamache'; she held that old persons ought to be respected; she could blush—she could feel shy. Her six months' incarceration in a Kensington boarding-school had, of course, shown her what a great number of prejudices there were for her to overcome, how much information to be acquired, if she ever hoped to come up at all to the standard of her young companions. But here the evil of these six months' probation ended. Strong, healthy natures do not take infection very readily from weaker ones. And in spite of her close friendship with Milly Dashwood, and the companionship of a dozen other girls, all more or less well up in mundane experience, Esther Fleming was bringing back just the same honest simple heart to her Devonshire home, this bright June day, as she had carried with her when she

quitted it last in the month of January.

'Be sure you write to me to-morrow,' were Millicent Dashwood's last words to her, after an indefinite number of parting kisses; 'and pray give my love to cousin David; and mind you don't think any more of that fair-haired Viking, Esther, dear. It would be so dreadful if he was only a Wiltshire farmer after all!'

Millicent, like many other very lively, good-tempered people, had a knack of saying something not perfectly agreeable at parting from her friends; something that, childish and unpremeditated though it might seem, contained a lurking bitterness at bottom. Jane, on the other hand, after being far from amiable in her manner to Esther during the last half-hour of the journey, took leave of her with a really warm hand-pressure, and with a few words about her having been kind to Milly at school, which went straight to Esther's heart.

'Poor Jane Dashwood! I believe hers is the best character of the two,' she thought, when she had seen the last of their two bright faces on the Bath platform. 'And yet, Jane's will be the most ruined by such a life as they seem to lead. Milly hasn't depth enough to be thoroughly spoiled. She will never do anything very good or very bad while she lives. Poor Jane! I should like to know more about her and this Arthur Peel; and I do hope she will marry him, and not Mr. Chichester. That was not a nice allusion of Miss Milly's to Wiltshire farmers. I am quite sure none but a gentleman could speak as that young man spoke.'

From which soliloquy you have, I hope, gathered, reader, that Esther is not to be a model heroine in spite of all the good things I have been saying of her. What model heroine would be annoyed at a little friendly playful spite? What model heroine would have the impropriety to vindicate, even to herself, a good-looking member of the other sex, of whose name, not to say station in life, she was wholly ignorant?

'I wish I could find out the truth

of this subject,' pursued Miss Fleming, in thought, 'if it were only for the sake of having a small triumph over Milly. What a school-girl I have become, though, to care about such nonsense; as if it can matter in the least to me whether that fair-haired, broad-shouldered, young gentleman, whom I shall never see again, is the son of a farmer or of a bishop.'

Esther drew herself up in imagination at the bare supposition her own brain had hazarded; and, I have no doubt, would have forgotten the stranger's existence long before she reached her own home had fate and the exigencies of railway travelling so willed it; but at Exeter she happened to pass and re-pass him on the platform about twenty-eight times while waiting for the North Devon train; and at Barnstable she had scarcely taken her place outside the Lynton coach before the Viking himself was seated opposite her. If these were not inexorable workings of fate what else were they? Esther took no trouble to contend against a destiny so obviously forced upon her; and answered in a very cheerful and unforbidding manner when the young stranger began some of those meteorological remarks with which all Englishmen find it easiest to get over the first or inaugural difficulties of chance-made acquaintance-ship.

Never having myself had personal intercourse with a Viking, I am, of course, unable to say whether the stranger bore, or did not bear, upon his face that marked hereditary resemblance which Milly Dashwood had made out for him. He was, at all events, a fine, handsome-looking, English lad—well-grown, sunburnt, fair-haired, with more perhaps of vigorous strength and health than of intellect upon his face; but with an open smile upon his rather large mouth, and a keen slightly-audacious hardihood in his blue eyes, which were not at all displeasing in Miss Fleming's sight.

'I am sure my fishing-rod is in your way,' he remarked, when as much had been got out of the weather and the immediate neighbourhood of Barnstable as was possible.

'Let me stow it away down here—there's plenty of room.'

'Not unless you wish it ground to impalpable powder,' interrupted Esther, glancing as she spoke at the feet of a huge Devonshire farmer who occupied the third place in the seat. 'I am not in the least inconvenienced. I only got up to look away across the country to the left. It is a favourite view of mine. You can see Lundy on a clear bright day, but the sun is too low and hazy now.'

'You know this part of the country, then?'

'I have lived here all my life, sir, until the last six months.'

'At Lynton?'

'No, among the Countisbury Hills, about halfway between the valley and Exmoor.'

'Rather a lonely place to live in, is it not?'

'Well, it is my home; and North Devonshire is often thought the most beautiful part of England,' added the girl a little proudly.

'Ah! so I hear,' the stranger answered. 'I have never myself been in this part of the world before.'

'And you are too early to see it in its greatest beauty now. August is the time: when the valleys are white with the harvest, and the dwarf furze makes the combs and hillsides golden, and the broad moorlands seem all afire with one grand sweep of ruby purple. If you look straight away over that low hill upon our right you can catch an outlying ridge of Exmoor already. Do you see?'

'No, not exactly,' replied the young man, whose eyes happened to be fixed at that moment upon Esther's own profile. 'I am rather near-sighted.'

'You will have a better view a mile or two further on. Don't you like travelling outside a coach?'

'Yes, under some circumstances. I have not been on one since I was a schoolboy.'

'Which must be a great many years ago,' thought Esther, glancing shyly at his fresh face. 'I hope you, too, are not going to turn out wearied of everything "blazé," as the Dashwoods call it.'

'You are accustomed to coaches, no doubt,' went on the stranger, who seemed determined not to let the conversation stand still. 'I suppose they are still an acknowledged institution in these primitive regions?'

'Our country is too grand for railways, sir. When you see—I mean,' colouring a little, 'if you ever see the hills about our house you will say that we can safely defy the best engineers in the world. What a nice cold breeze is coming up from the north! doesn't it seem like another world after that stifling heated air of London? John Hartman,' leaning over, and speaking to the coachman, 'what sort of weather has it been at home this spring?'

'Main fine, Miss Esther,' answered John Hartman, in a great cheery voice, and turning round a red face smooth as a cider-apple; 'dry and open for the sowing, and wet from first o' March up to Easter. The hay's down to farmer Litson's already, Miss Esther.'

'And more fule he!' remarked the gentleman with the feet, sententiously.

'Why, Mr. Vellicot?' asked Esther, to whom all the red jolly faces on the coach were evidently familiar ones. 'Why shouldn't Litson cut his hay when he likes?'

'I never said he weren't to cut it, Miss Fleming; I said he were a fule for cutting it.' And Mr. Vellicot pointed, with a significant colossal finger, towards a distant line of intensely blue uplands on the right.

'Ah, there is Exmoor,' said Esther to the stranger; 'and our seeing it so plainly now is a sign that we shall have rain by to-morrow. Such rain we have here! I don't think drops of the same size fall in any other place in the world. You get wet through in about a minute and a half.'

'What a charming climate it must be! Bitterly cold, as far as I understand our friend in front, until March; rain for the remainder of the spring; and daily showers that wet you through in a minute and a half in the summer.'

'Oh, but sportsmen don't care for getting wet,' said Esther, laughing.

'And you know the fish always rise best after rain. Is there good sport this season, Mr. Vellicot?'

'Depends on what folk reckon sport,' replied the farmer, laconically.

'Well, are there many fish, I mean?'

'Yes, there be fish, Miss Fleming.'

'And don't they rise?'

'They do to them they knows,' said Mr. Vellicot, looking with stolid sarcasm at his young neighbour's bran new and elaborately-scientific London rod. 'Though there's scores of strangers already a-lashing and a-fulling about the fish, Master David killed four brace last Monday.'

'He did better than that, end of May,' fore the visitors come,' begun the coachman; then a sudden recollection of the indelicacy of the remark, or of the possible half-crown he was risking, seemed to overcome him, and he corrected himself; 'before the weather turned off so dry. Mrs. Engleheart be looking spracker than ever this spring, Miss Esther, and Miss Joan the same.'

'And Mr. David?'

'Oh, Master David, he keeps much as usual—much as usual, Miss Esther, thank ye.'

'Will he be at the mill to meet me, do you think, John?'

'Not much fear of that,' remarked the farmer. 'He were up to our house last night in the dark, Mr. David were, after a pair of young pigeons for you, Miss Fleming.' And Mr. Vellicot followed up this information with a far-off smothered sound which, when it first left its destination, might possibly have been intended by its originator for a laugh.

Miss Fleming received the intelligence without the faintest symptom of embarrassment; but the young stranger nevertheless conceived an instant dislike towards this unknown David. The male cousins of very pretty girls are always objectionable. David, with his pastoral gallantries of young pigeons and wayside trysts at mills, was, no doubt, some red-cheeked rustic fool, to whom this young woman had been engaged since she was seven years old. She was not so very handsome, after all, when you got accustomed to her

face; and her hands were awfully sunburnt, although tolerably well shaped.

'Does the coach pass close to your house?' he asked her in a very fine-gentleman and patronizing manner. 'I suppose we are getting near Lynton now.'

'We are still four miles away from Lynton,' answered Esther, utterly indifferent to any change in his manner: 'and nearly as far from my home, which lies among the Countisbury hills, straight away before us. But I shall get down when we reach the valley that you see yonder,' and she pointed down a steep leafy chasm close beside the road, through which the distant roar of unseen waters could be heard. 'The mill down below is the nearest point to my home, and the rest of the way I shall walk.'

'With cousin David,' thought the stranger promptly. 'Philomel and Baucis, Chloe and Strephon, among the woods.' And, although he had just decided that Esther possessed very few personal attractions, he remained uncommonly silent during the next quarter of an hour. This travelling outside a coach, after all, was frightfully boring work; particularly when the close neighbourhood of a young and loquacious woman made it imperative on one's own sense of gallantry not to smoke.

'There he is!' cried Esther, in immense excitement, as a sudden turn of the road brought them to the bottom of the hill; and the coachman pulled up close beside a little mouldering foot-plank across the river. 'There is David, standing on the bridge! Good-bye, Mr. Vellicot; love to Maggie, and tell her to come and see me soon. Good evening, sir,' and she turned with a shy but not ungraceful salutation to the stranger. 'I hope you will have good sport, and like our country when you come to know it better.'

But the young man's eyes were intently fixed on a most remarkable-looking figure which, too diffident as it seemed to approach nearer, was standing in an attitude ludicrously expressive at once of unbounded delight and utter helplessness upon the little bridge. Cousin David,

then, was no fair-faced handsome lad of twenty; but a man of grotesque exterior, with a loose slovenly gait, with long shambling limbs, with a vacuous childish face: a man of almost idiotic manner, and of middle age. How sweet Miss Fleming's voice broke upon him with its hearty 'Good evening,' just as he attained to this culminating point of his investigation! What a beautiful frank face it was that turned to him for a moment before she left his side!

'Good evening. I—I perhaps may have the pleasure of meeting you some day while I am in this neighbourhood?' And he actually caught himself—he, a man of the world of two-and-twenty—feeling embarrassed under the girl's steady eyes.

'It is very likely, I think. I often go out fishing with my cousin.' And then Esther, after making this straightforward reply, blushed rather unnecessarily as the stranger offered his hand to assist her in her descent.

Simple though she was, some fine intuition had, I suppose, instructed her as to the meaning of the young man's altered manner. At all events, her eyes drooped beneath his, and during the half minute that he firmly held her hand the colour on her face deepened into quite a guilty crimson. Then he saw how wonderfully handsome that delicate dark face really was: beauty is so much heightened by its consciousness of our own regard: and, I am forced to confess, his hand lingered a moment longer than was strictly necessary on Miss Fleming's while he aided her descent into the extended arms of the great rosy country girl who stood ready to receive her.

'Is this yours *tu*, Miss Fleming?' inquired the coachman, taking out a small black valise from the inside of the coach, where he was struggling after Esther's possessions among the *objecta membra* of the four outraged inside passengers: 'I can't make more than seven parcels if it isn't.'

'No; that is mine,' cried the young stranger; but, I imagine, without deceitful emphasis; for Miss Fleming's eyes were at that moment

engaged in 'reading the name upon the label; 'perhaps this is the missing parcel.' And he handed down Esther's travelling plaid, which in her hurry of saying good-bye she had left beside him on the seat.

She thanked him with a smile in which, naturally, there was a whole world more of acquaintanceship now that she had learnt his name, and in another minute John Hartman was on the box, and the coach had started towards Lynton.

CHAPTER III.

A MUSCULAR HEROINE.

THE sinking sun was shining, warm and golden, upon the farm at Countisbury when Esther and her cousin first caught sight of it from the valley.

It was an irregular low-built stone house, entirely hemmed in by desolate hills save on the west, where the landscape opened by a wild and precipitous ravine into the wooded valley of the Lynn: its only approach a rugged moorland track, never traversed save by the carts of peat-cutters or herds of cattle on their way down from the moors: its only neighbours the weird and giant forms of the overhanging barren cliffs. The first question that an indweller of towns would involuntarily ask himself on seeing it was, how any human being could build a habitation in such a spot? the second, how any other human being could choose the habitation, when built, to live in? And yet, as Esther caught the first glimpse of its low gray walls this summer evening it came upon her strongly that she had seen nothing half so charming as her own home during the six months she had been away from it. The rosy white of the blossoming thorn before the door; the lichened pointed roof glowing orange in the sunset; the masses of delicate gray stone upon the neighbouring hill-side; the fading purple of the moorlands far above—all smote her with so much of the pathetic clearness of familiar faces, for a time grown unfamiliar, that, somewhat to her companion's embarrassment, she leaned

heavily on his arm just when they reached the wicket of the garden; and without volunteering any explanation whatever of her reasons for doing so, began to cry.

'Don't, if you please, Esther,' whispered David Engleheart, softly. 'There is Joan coming out of the house to meet us. She is quite sure to see you have been crying, and you know her objection to tears.'

'I can't help it, David, dear,' said Esther; 'it is only out of joy to be back again with you. Joan herself couldn't mind that.'

However, she turned aside before entering the garden gate; and under pretence of addressing Patty, who, weighed down by the portmanteau and all other parcels, was walking cheerily beside them, managed to wipe away every trace of obnoxious and foolish emotion before Joan Engleheart came up.

'Here you are,' cried a voice, not so much loud as persistently strong and unmodulated in its tones. 'Half an hour behind your time, at least. Patty, girl, don't carry the portmanteau by the handles; it drags 'em to pieces. Esther, how do you do? you look pale.'

And Miss Joan bestowed what she doubtless would herself have termed a kiss upon her young relation's forehead. It felt more like the push from a stick or other hard material, than the contact of frail flesh-and-blood lips; however, since Esther had been accustomed to it at intervals from her infancy, she took it in its mystical or figurative meaning.

'How is Aunt Engleheart, Joan? I saw Mr. Vellicot on the coach, and he and John Hartman told me she was looking better than ever this summer. What do you think?'

'My mother is perfectly well,' replied Miss Joan. It was a way of hers always to answer questions by making an independent statement of general facts. 'Yes' or 'no' might be very well for persons who allowed themselves to be led by others in conversation: Miss Joan was not going to be led by others in anything. 'My mother is well, and able to exert herself as much as ever. What other affair of

ours did Mr. Vellicot take the trouble to express his opinion about?'

'Nothing at all, Joan, except——' and the girl turned round with a smile to David; 'except your kindness in getting me the pigeons, cousin. I have so often wished for some nice white pigeons like Maggie's.'

David blushed in a manner ludicrously conscious for a man of his age and appearance: Miss Joan gave a single and by no means pleasant-sounding laugh. 'Pigeons!' she repeated, with an emphatic irony that seemed to redouble David's confusion. 'Pigeons! I think I see them, picking the mortar out of the chimneys, and eating my early peas! However, I needn't alarm myself. None but a fool, or David Engleheart, would think of full-fledged pigeons stopping in a new cot, a mile away from where they were bred. There's only one way to keep them.'

'A little salt,' suggested David, feebly. 'I have heard if a little salt is sprinkled under their new cot, it will make them——'

'Rubbish!' remarked Joan; 'rubbish! Put 'em in a pie and eat 'em; that's the only thing to prevent them flying away. Go in by the window, Esther. At David's wish, and in spite of my mother's rheumatism, we have had the tea set in the house-place to-night.'

The house-place was a large stone-flagged room in the centre of the building. In winter it was horribly cold, and made all the rest of the house cold from its northerly aspect and ill-fitting doors; but for three months of the year it got an hour or two of warmth and light at sunset, and from the time when Esther was a little child it had always been an especial jubilee for her when Miss Joan would allow the supper to be placed there on a summer evening. The small comfortable sitting-room to the south, which the elder members of the family had the good sense to prefer, possessed no charms for her like the grotesque corners and closets, the huge old-fashioned fire-place, the low rafted ceiling, the many-paned lozenge windows of the house-place: and she felt duly

sensible of poor David's kindness and crafty generalship in having tea ready for her there on this first evening of her return. Miss Joan, herself, had no taste whatever for the picturesque; and it took a good deal of argument to bring her into changing any of the routine arrangements of the household. And no one knew better than Esther what it was to argue with Miss Engleheart.

At the present moment, however, with the rich rays of the level sun streaming through the open window—transmuting its odorous frame of roses into gold, and lighting up the old oak-panneled walls into ruddiest orange-brown—even Miss Joan herself could not accuse the house-place of looking chill or gloomy. To Esther, following upon the horrible gentility of her Kensington school-room, the hearty, homely look of the old house was like going back to the familiar enchantment of a fairy story, after the chilling, although improving, atmosphere of Mangnall's Questions. She could scarcely believe that she had been enjoying the first advantages of Kensington Gravel-pits for six long months. Miss Bates, and all belonging to her, seemed a bad dream. The old house-place in the setting sun, David's kind face, Miss Joan herself, were the pleasant home realities to which she was awakening.

A reality of a very forcible nature Joan Engleheart undoubtedly was. If muscular heroines happen to come into fashion during the present generation, her form would, I am sure, serve as a perfect model for any novelist bent upon pleasing the popular taste to draw from. Strong, sharp, and spare, there was not an ounce of superfluous flesh on her body. Muscles, bones, a tough outside covering of dark skin, indomitable eyes, and a general stoniness of feature, were her leading and characteristic charms. She looked like a woman, who having found life unpleasant, had every intention of making other people share her own opinion: and such was, in truth, the key-note of her character. Human creatures, as a general rule, are not

hard and angular merely that they may make amusing studies for other human creatures to speak or write about, but because untoward accidents have, at one time or another, beaten and crushed them into their angularity. Doubtless, when she was a baby, Miss Joan had the roundness of soul and body which it is normal for the young of our species to possess during the first two years of existence; doubtless, as a child, she had enjoyed mischief and sweet food like other children: as a young girl—no, a young girl she never was! Before she was sixteen, Joan Engleheart knew that her lot had fallen upon hard and barren places; that she was plain, ungraceful, reputed sullen, and, worse than all—poor. From that time until the present—how many gray, cold, bitter years that period embraced, she, herself, only knew! Joan Engleheart, soul and body, had been progressing in the process of ossification. When Esther was little, she used to beg to be whipt with a rod instead of Miss Joan's fingers; 'they stung so.' And this peculiar stinging property belonged quite as much to her heart and tongue as to her fingers. 'Life is too short to attend to such fiddle-faddles,' she used to say, when any one writhed, visibly, under her bitter home-truths. 'Delicate discrimination, fine sensibilities! does any one get on better in the world for possessing such a mighty thin skin, I should like to know? Certainly not. Then, why should I lose my time in trying to avoid pricking it? No one ever tried to avoid hurting me, and, I am thankful to say, no one could hurt me if they wished. Life is a battle: let every one make use of their own arms in fighting it. Mine are not flowers of speech and flattery.'

Certainly they were not. If the opinion be true, that to be utterly disagreeable is to be a fine character—Joan Engleheart's was a noble one. She was wonderfully disagreeable. She did everything against which human nature, ordinarily, revolts. She rose at unearthly hours in the depth of winter. She could sit without winking through

the longest sermons, and afterwards repeat them, verbatim, to her family in the evening. She, voluntarily, was treasurer of a clothing-club. She never forgot dates. She was always willing to break bad news to any one: fond of cold water, of training young servants, and giving servants notice, and keeping accounts, and detecting mistakes in bills, and, generally, hurting the feelings and taking down the self-esteem of every person with whom she came in contact. Such words as the 'Battle of Life' contained no metaphor for her. Her whole life *was* a battle. All the sordid struggles, all the hard exertion, which frail human nature, in its unregenerate condition seeks to evade, Miss Joan met half-way—nay, seemed to court with warmth; as though she knew that her nature derived vigour from every fresh buffeting she had to encounter. Poor David said it made him tired to look at her, there was such a fearful amount of spiteful, iron energy written on her whole appearance. And her moral nature was, of a truth, in strictest accordance with her hard, relentless face. To the persons she loved—and she did love two or three persons in the world—Miss Joan never made what the wildest imagination could call, a pleasant speech. She would nurse them with grim fidelity if they were sick; would sit up with them, night after night; would physic them, blister them, bleed them, close their eyelids, if necessary, with unerring nerve and fortitude. But not at the very portals of death itself would she have softened. About once a year she was in the habit of taking cold—a vindictive cruel species of cold, quite peculiar to her own organization; and the sight of Miss Joan, with red and tearful eyes, used quite to awe all the other members of the family on these occasions. If poor David had suddenly made a witty speech, the phenomenon would not have been more strange and disconcerting than was the unwonted appearance of softening or tears within Miss Engleheart's eyes.

So, at this first moment of her return, Esther only felt that Joan's

face was something natural, homely, and familiar, and never missed from it the kindly affectionate smile with which David had welcomed her. 'Home looks so bright and comfortable, Joan,' she cried, as together they entered the house-place, where the best tea-service and old Mrs. Engleheart were awaiting them.

'Dear aunt, how kind of you to have everything in such nice order for me! You are looking better than ever.' And she ran up and threw her arms in her hearty way round Mrs. Engleheart's neck.

'You look chilled, mother,' remarked Miss Joan, with her own happy knack of being as crushing as every occasion permitted. 'Put on my clogs, immediately. David, I will trouble you to shut the window while Esther helps me to carry up the luggage. Patty,' addressing the girl, who with round eager eyes was staring into Esther's face, 'why are you not seeing to the kettle? You idiot!'

Mrs. Engleheart—a very passive, poverty-bowed woman of nearly eighty—had never for the last quarter of a century disputed a single fiat of Joan's, and meekly did as she was desired at once; but David, who rarely rebelled on small occasions, hesitated. 'The air is so warm, Joan, and the smell of the hawthorns must be such a treat to Esther.'

'Which is of such extreme importance compared to my mother's rheumatism,' remarked Joan, bristling.

'Oh, I think it is quite time to shut the window,' cried the girl, quickly. 'The air always gets chill at sunset. What lovely strawberries, Joan. I have not tasted a strawberry yet this summer. Are they from our own garden?'

'We always send to Exeter for our forced fruits,' remarked Miss Joan. 'Persons in our position can't wait for the sun's plebeian operations like common folk.'

Notwithstanding which gentle irony, Miss Joan felt as much mollified as it was possible for her ever to feel. A compliment to her garden or her household was the one thing that, at times, could turn aside the sharp edge of her temper;

and the sunshine of Esther's face, her radiant, childish happiness at returning home, were influences that even Joan found it impossible quite to withstand.

'You have not grown, child, and I don't think that you have improved,' was the remark with which she testified to her softened spirit, when they were all seated round the tea-table. 'It is to be hoped Aunt Thalia's fifty pounds have done more for your mental, than they have for your bodily development.'

'Not much, I am afraid,' answered Esther. 'I have forgotten some of the things I knew when I went to school, and have not learnt very much in their place. I suppose I was too old to be finished, or else that finishing can't be done in six months. Perhaps I play the piano a very little better than I did when I went, and I have certainly learnt to dance. For the rest—'

'You dress your hair much neater than you used, Esther,' said old Mrs. Engleheart, who seldom heard more than Joan's very high notes in any conversation. 'David, don't you think the child a vast deal improved in her looks?'

David was, undoubtedly, in a position to pronounce a competent judgment, his eyes being fixed straight upon the 'child's' face as she sat, not in, but scarce apart from the yellow sunlight, which, partially intercepted by the waving thorn-boughs, threw a mosaic of fantastic, softly-changing lights upon the wall above her head. But the old lady had to repeat the question twice before he was aroused from his own thoughts; and then, instead of answering promptly, he coloured up, and smiled, and rubbed his huge hands, and, finally, delivered himself to the effect that he believed—he meant he rather thought—Esther was grown.

'Not an inch,' said Joan, decisively. 'Young women never do grow after seventeen. I was as tall and well-knit at fourteen as I am now. Esther has got pads in her hair, which makes her head look bigger: that's all. Talking of pads, Esther, what do you think of Patty Simmons?'

'She has improved wonderfully, Joan. You are making quite a good servant of her. What has become of William Tillyer? I remember at Christmas Patty thought herself engaged to him.'

'Engaged!' repeated Joan. 'He! he!—actually she, Joan Engleheart, laughed. 'A girl of mine engaged! Well, she is disengaged long ago, I can assure you.'

All servant-girls were sources of genial, vital refreshment to the unflagging energies of Miss Joan's mind, but a servant-girl with a lover was a perfect well-spring to her. Waking or sleeping, a young woman thus situated gave her, so to speak, a new spite in life. The howlings of midnight winter blasts she took for whistles of assignation demanding her own immediate presence, in a flannel-jacket and clogs, outside the house-door. The crowing of Farmer Vellicot's cocks at sunrise startled her into sudden action from her bed with the well-known war-whoop 'There he is!' on her lips. Miserable though she was when inactive, she would stand in ambush for a whole summer evening behind one of the garden trees, never moving, and scarcely breathing, until that intensely-longed-for moment came, when she could pounce out upon the lovers, and shame and trample upon the man to his face, and drive the frail, detected Molly before her, with bitterest degradation and contumely, to the house. No servant could outwit her: nothing could escape her. Lovers and broken crockery, flaws in the character and in the tea-cups, were alike brought to light by her unsleeping vigilance. I believe she would have scented a 'grease-pot,' that *ne plus ultra* of domestic infamy, quicker than any other woman in Europe. She saw villainous plots in every one of the servants' actions, and accomplices in every one of their relations. Once, years ago, when they first came to Countisbury, an old man—the grandfather of the Molly for the time being—came and asked in a deprecating voice if he might have 'the wash.' I wish you could have seen Miss Joan's smile: she only

smiled in reply. As if such a woman as herself ever had 'a wash;' or, if she had had, would have encouraged old men who wanted 'washes' about the house?

'Yes, Esther, I got rid of William Tillyer on quite a new principle, and one that I mean to adopt for the future. "Show your sweetheart into the kitchen the next evening he comes," I said to Patty; "I like all these things to be quite open and above board." Patty, great fool, did as she was bid, and I went out and found them there together. "You are coming after my servant, William Tillyer," I said; "do you want to marry her?" Patty signed to him to say "Yes," and he said it, after hanging his tongue out, and diving in his pockets for an answer for about five minutes. "Very well," I remarked, "then I'll step up to Parson Justin's to-morrow, and you shall be asked next Sunday. Good-night." I wish you had seen his face, Esther. He begged and prayed, and promised he'd never set foot inside our doors if I'd only let him off that time. This, of course, was what I wanted; and since then Patty has had no more lovers.'

'Poor thing!' said David, kindly. 'And she really is young, and not ill-favoured to look upon.'

'Oh, David thinks it very hard servants should not have their lovers to supper every evening, and wear black velvet tails in their hair, and hoops under their dirty gowns!' said Joan, with kindling eyes. 'Esther, will you believe me that Patty wore a hoop last Easter Sunday? I had my eye on her as she walked down the aisle, because I suspected her of having pink ribbons inside her bonnet; but when I caught sight of the red merino skirt shaking to and fro about her feet over something hard and angular, it quite took my breath away. However, I followed her out, and in the porch, with half a dozen of her friends round her, I twitched up her skirts, by accident, with the hook of my umbrella. "You have been at my hen-coop again, then, Patty," I said, very kindly, but

holding up the hoop for the observation of all her friends, among whom I remember was William Tillyer's new sweetheart. She cried and sulked right into the middle of the next week, but has been less strict in her adherence to fashion ever since.'

'I don't think servants want hoops,' said Esther, laughing; 'but I never have seen, and never can see, why they should not have lovers.'

'Nor I,' put in David, boldly. 'Here you have poor, honest, enduring, obliging creatures, who get up for you at horrible hours of a winter's morning, and stay out of their beds late, working for you at night, and yet you expect them to give up, not only their strength and their youth, but their human feeling to your service. It is too bad, Joan. Why shouldn't servants have lovers?'

'Because the lovers eat my bread and cheese and cold meat, and we have not quite two hundred a year, cousin,' answered Miss Joan, as she rose from table. 'What makes you so wonderfully lenient upon lovers all at once, David? I should have thought it was a subject that, at your time of life, you might have ceased to trouble your head about.'

I think this side-wind disconcerted David Engleheart somewhat, for he rushed away immediately, and began thrumming a very mild tune upon the window-pane with his fingers, which was an invariable sign that Miss Joan was 'telling' upon him. Esther waited until Mrs. Engleheart and her daughter had betaken themselves to the parlour, where Joan mightily inflicted a lengthened process that she termed 'readings' upon the patient old lady before carrying her off to bed; then she went, softly, up to David's side.

'Cousin, shall we go out in the garden for an hour? I long to see how all the flowers are looking, and you have not had your evening pipe yet.'

He turned and caught her hand, fondly, between both his own enormous ones. 'Dear little Esther! how glad I am to have you back

again! You must never go away again, child!

'No, David.'

'Life at Countiabury is a poor—a wintry affair without you, Esther. The first really warm sun I have felt, since last summer, was—just at the moment when I first caught sight of you on the coach. You were smiling, Esther.'

'Oh, yes! Mr. Vellicot was making some of his quaint remarks,' said the girl, with a quick easiveness that had never entered within the limits of her narrow mental experiences until that moment. 'I remember quite well.'

'But it was not Farmer Vellicot who was seated next you, Esther.'

'No? Who was it, then? Oh, to be sure! I recollect;' and Miss Fleming's manner became wonderfully careless and indifferent. 'That was a stranger, cousin David.'

'Ah! You don't know his name, of course?'

'Well! yes. I happened—I did not want to know it in the least—but I happened to see the direction on his luggage as I was getting down from the coach, and—let us go into the garden, cousin. Everything smells so sweet and fresh, and the stars are out already.'

'And his name was?'

'Oliver Carew.' Esther opened the window-latch, and leaned her face out, doubtless to see the stars more clearly.

'Did he talk to you much on the road, Esther?'

'Yes, a little. He has come here to fish; and I told him you fished—and so——'

'And so, no doubt, Mr. Oliver Carew hopes that he will meet Miss Fleming again?'

'I really don't know: it is very unimportant,' she answered; but, notwithstanding the uncertain light, he could see the colour rising in her face. 'Wait one minute, David dear, till I have got my hat, and then we will have one of our nice starlit walks, just to bring us back to old times again.' And she left him, and ran upstairs with all her accustomed childish spirits, the burthen of one of the familiar childish songs that he had taught her upon her lips.

'Changed, changed for ever!' thought David Engleheart. 'I ought to have prepared myself for this, and I didn't. I was a fool!'

And a sudden, sharp spasm of pain struck through poor David's simple heart.



THE SPIRIT CHILD :

A Bridegroom's Tale of the New Year.

I.

'TWAS midnight, in a haunted house. I had no fears: dear heart!
 The chambers of the soul are foul when shadows make us start.
 A pine-log sparkled on the hearth: the dying wind moaned low;
 And, lapping 'gainst the old gray rocks, I heard the sea-waves flow.
 Half shrouded by a curtain's folds, at distance far away,
 I sat and watched the stars of fire fade out in ashes gray;
 When, ushered by a trail of light that seemed to ride on air,
 A footstep with a music fall stole up the household stair.
 That was no fall of living foot,—that was no mortal tread,
 That, like dropped notes from some weird harp, betrayed a silence fled!
 Such notes as o'er the muffled chords the low harmonic flings,
 When some skilled hand, with sidelong beat, has softly struck the strings.
 The door swung back without a sound,—slid slowly from its place,
 Smooth as a plank that o'er a stream the rippled waters chase;
 And through the unbarred portal stole a vision sweet as new,
 A child-like form in mist-white robes,—a lily bathed in dew.
 It was not that her face was fair as angel faces be,
 Her floating locks like tendrils strayed from a wine-fruited tree,
 Her meek eyes like the still blue heavens new-opened to the day,—
 It was not these, dear heart of mine! that bore *my* heart away.
 It was that to my lonely hearth, in such a world as this,
 Should come, in pure and child-like faith, a tender soul from bliss—
 Should pass unshrinking, self-sustained, with God's permission given,
 The quicksand drift that fills the rift between this world and heaven!
 For it was on a New Year's night, when evil souls are awed,
 And spirits touched by God alone in glory walk abroad.
 So, out into the darkness, love! I cast the demon Fear,
 While to the glowing embers slow my vision sweet drew near.
 Low sitting by the flashing wood, with hands like folded prayers
 That lie at rest about the breast, then open unawares,
 She basked; and, breaking into smiles, seemed with full grasp to hold
 The genial heat that feels so sweet to one whose hearth is cold.
 No movement made I: not for worlds would I the spell have broke.
 She turned: she stooped; the conscious air she softly seemed to stroke;
 As one who chased by peril stands, sole championed by a hound—
 As one who knows by some fine touch where faithfulness is found.
 A gladdened soul within her eyes, with spirit-pinions stirred,
 Half settling where the fire-light flickered, fluttered like a bird;
 Radiant as a butterfly among the meadow-rings,
 Tranced in one moment's rapturous clasp and unclasp of wings!
 But now, the hearth-light dying low, she rose like some new day:
 The shadowy finger of the dark slow motioned her away;
 And, striking on my heartstrings, love! she trod the visioned air,
 And throbbing, throbbing died those wild notes down the music stair!

II.

A vassal of my father's house, an orphan child of tears,
 Stood where the water lance-rush quivered, guarded by the spears;
 When, blowing merry bugle blasts, urging a courser fleet,
 I sought a noble hound I lost—and found him at her feet.

Familiar round his silken ears I watched her fingers curl;
 Her idler hand upon his head lay like a new-dropped pearl:
 As round the oak the mistletoe, that owns no native root,
 Her need of love had twined her round the dumb love of the brute.
 Swift fancy to the future flew!—I slipped my courser's rein.
 Grave manhood at my heart stood still, and youth was come again!
 The prophet in my spirit worked—so true, I seemed to know
 To what a flower, in sheltered nook, this drooping bud might blow.
 I stole her with a tender touch: I looked into her eyes,
 From whose clear depths a fount of joy leaped up in sweet surprise.
 My noble hound I gave to her, about her steps to roam;
 I set her on my courser's back, and led her smiling home.
 Was it the dazzling daylight glare a strange confusion made?
 Or was this sweet sunlit soul the soul that walked in shade
 On ice-bound rivers heap the fires, the frozen waters flow:
 So, melting in my bosom's warmth, I knew my child of snow!
 Rich joy was ours! The happy hours along life's dial stealing
 Left not a mark to streak with dark the kindled light of feeling.
 To me whose days soared up the prime, to her whose days were few,
 The young spring died at summer's side, and still the Year was New.
 Through books the old dead oracles of youth did we explore;
 From mount and mine, 'neath oak and vine, I taught her living lore.
 The glad morn long, with flowers of song, we wreathed the budding
 weather;
 On winter eves, from old dead leaves, we crushed the sweets together.
 With day her heart in frankness shared the gladness that she brought:
 At night we knew a parted hour, but not a parted thought;
 Till, rising from some dream disturbed, she breathed that midnight's
 breath
 That fanned my lone hearth's failing fires—a moving Life-in-Death!
 Bursting the bonds of sleep, like one escaped from prison bars;
 With smiles and sighs,—with open eyes that never saw the stars;
 Swimming a sea of crystal thoughts, like a white snow-drop drowned,
 Each night she came, and breathed my name, and stroked her phantom
 bound.
 Soon fell a change. Her heart at rest, too happy now for dreams,
 Went floating down the tide of sleep, like waifs on silent streams.
 One night I missed her, as we miss the white foot on the floor,
 When, launched afar on heaven's blue sea, Life's angels come no more!

III.

Lift, lift those eyes, my one-day's bride! where love sits throned in
 youth;
 Bid echo speak without a voice, and give back truth for truth:
 And pardon that dear treachery, which hoarded as a vow,
 A spirit-secret, dark to thee, and never breathed till now!
 O, answering kiss!—Leave, leave those lips to linger where they light,
 Not waft and go like restless birds bound on a passing flight:
 Here let them cling like birds of spring, storm-drifted on a spray,
 Make summer in the winter's heart, and fold their wings and stay!
 Like thee, too, spirit-guided once I wandered in a dream,
 And musing strayed, and found a maid lost by a haunted stream;
 Her brows with shining innocence, like some rich jewel, crowned,
 Girt by lances of the angels, love! that kept the guarded ground.

She, to whose soul all loving words were relics laid at rest,
 Stole a dumb love in silent faith, and clasped it to her breast.
 A Christmas rose snatched from the snows that bound a grave, she smiled
 With dew upon her eyelids, love!—a spirit, yet a child!

She met me with the cruel hunter's flush upon my face;
 She plucked the arrow from my hand, and set a reed in place.
 She garlanded my father's hall with lilies of the field:
 She chained with ivy to the wall my helm, my sword, my shield.

She took my heart and moulded it; to spirit turned the clay,
 Till like another Memnon, love! I felt the touch of day,
 As stealing with the steps of dawn, each step a music-beat,
 She walked the chambers of my soul with light about her feet!

Though wrecked like him whose ruins mock the old Egyptian sod,
 I knew the hand that kindled while it lifted me to God,
 Clapsed in life's stony desert, love! each silent pulse would thrill
 And quicken with immortal fire, and make a music still.

I wake! I hear a voice whose music dies not with the sun!
 One vision lost, a sweeter vision whispers all I won:
 Dear heart!—the heart that beats to mine, the soul to Heaven true,
 The wifehood of my wildest dream—the child and spirit too!

E. L. H.

A COFFEE-ROOM CHRISTMAS.

THE ANGEL INN, IRONSTOWN.

LOOKING out through the darkness on the main deck of the 'Royal Consort,' paddle steamer, at the files of lamps which were passing us by as we came up the Channel of Ironstown, Captain Cocker repeated his asseveration—

'Trains! Lots of trains, I tell you: five-and-twenty in the day. Bless you, in these times they must put one on every quarter of an hour or so, to meet the traffic.'

This was a great relief; for I had embarked late on Christmas Eve at an Irish port. My good friends the Plushers had written me to come to their house, halfway between Ironstown and London, and keep Christmas Day with them. My own family were in France; so I should have had a solemn dismal day of it, quite alone at my Irish home, far inland. The idea had been sudden; and on the Christmas Eve I embarked with Captain Cocker.

It was about half-past seven of this Christmas morning, and we were coming in to the cumbrous mammoth town of Ironstown—the Tyre

and Sidon of England: Tyre being at one side of the river, Sidon at the other. It was pitch dark. As we went along slowly by, Tyre was dotted over with a spray of yellow lights, like a punctured card. Here were the docks and wharves, dim and indistinct; and we stopped opposite a huge tower, with a blazing clock-face that seemed hung high in the air, like an illuminated ball.

We were put ashore. No cabs—Christmas morning. No porters—Christmas morning again. A stray man was found who did not recognise the festival as a matter of observance, save in one respect—the remuneration for his services. He shouldered my mails. The last words of Captain Cocker were, 'Lots of trains. Bless you! five-and-twenty in the day.' The first words of the porter who did [not recognize festivals were, 'It's an early one as goes to-day.'

This remark having reference to the departure of the train, disturbed me a little; and I suggested that we should direct our course to the sta-

tion, an arrangement to which he acceded. It was very, very dark, like the middle of the night, and clocks were chiming in all directions. We came to dead walls occasionally, decorated with such flaming posters, so fiery in their vermillion, that they actually lit themselves up like glow-worms of preternatural size. I saw they had reference to the pantomimic revels that would set in the night following. I read as I ran, for we were pushing on fast, and thought, with a sort of delight, of these revels. This note of preparation has always a charm, and set the chime of Christmas bells within me a ringing. For with me happily they are not yet cracked.

Here was the terminus of the Great London and Ironstown Railway, huge and towering, but closed. We were too soon. The porter who disregarded festivals went round to the side, and returned presently.

'Wot hotel?' he asked.

'Why—have we to wait so long?' I said.

'There ain't none,' he answered ungrammatically.

'Ain't none what?' I asked impatiently, adapting myself to his peculiar phraseology.

'They're all gone,' he said: 'there'll be no more to-day, until eleven-five to-night.'

I was crushed by this blow, and went round to see somebody in person myself. There was one officer of the watch, as it were, left, the rest were away. 'Christmas Day, you know,' he said.

It was quite true. No more trains until eleven-five at night: Christmas Day, you know.

I did not feel it so acutely at first. 'The Angel Hotel,' I told the porter indifferent as to festivals to lead me to. He did so.

There was a large square lamp hung out over the door like a sign. We had to ring a good deal. The streets were beginning to fill a little, and the gasmen were flying up ladders putting out the lamps. The grey of the morning was taking the place of the pitch darkness of night. The door was opened after the third ring by a chambermaid, who 'car-

'her broom much as a soldier 'carries arms.' The apologetic 'Christmas morning, you know. We so rarely have folks.'

The coffee-room fire was just lighted, so I sat there until the day set fairly in—until it got bright and light and fresh. The general furnishing and polishing of that apartment was not completed, but went on in my presence. I was indifferent, being a prey to the lowest and most morbid state of despondency. It was only now I was beginning to realize the situation.

Nine o'clock: I went to the window. The day was now quite fresh and bright and clear; the streets full—a perfect procession of people, hurrying every way and from every way, each person suggesting the idea of vigorous scouring and burnishing over night. The cleanest, robustest, most cheerful company I had seen for a long time. No wonder—they had not come over in a 'Royal Consort,' with a Captain Cocker, to be cast adrift miserably in a great commercial wilderness, without a friend. I turned away from the window. The dungeon—I called the coffee-room the dungeon—was of the true pattern; paper, a gloomy dining-room crimson; curtains dingy; half a dozen tables, like islands, all round, where you might dine like Robinson Crusoe in strict solitude. I remarked with a grim complacency the weak idiosyncrasy of all coffee-rooms—a lavish development of Worcestershire sauce bottles. That article was displayed with a profuseness that amounted to recklessness. Why Worcestershire? The selection seemed invidious: it was characteristic of the place; but, of course, 'John Dunton' knew best what concerned him most.

John Dunton, I found, kept the Royal Angel. (A Royal Angel! how ludicrous!) J. D., in taking on the establishment, kept for many years by the widow of the late W. Mad-docks, hoped for a continuance of the generous patronage hitherto bestowed. J. D. would spare nothing, &c. How loathsome these platitudes, which are the common failing of all hotel-keepers! I read no more.

On the chimneypiece the programme of the limited Impartial Insurance Company, in a gold frame. There were pictures of the various residences of the Impartial—at London, at Dublin, at Canada; and for the moment a comparison of the various styles of these edifices interested me. Then I read the whole of their officers, the sums they had divided, the advantages they offered, and other particulars—it was a device to banish care.

The waiter was now in the room—a dry perked man with frizzled hair that stuck out, and a curious way of putting each of his sides forward alternately as he walked. He was uneasy on the subject of breakfast, and made disturbance among the cruet-stands to attract me; finally—an unworthy subterfuge—he asked the number of my room.

‘I have no number,’ I said moodily. ‘I am—I am not quite come to that.’

Half-past nine: Breakfast—not a creditable specimen of that meal; but, the fact was, ‘Christmas, you know, sir,’ &c. I *did* know; I understood him.

Half-past ten: I went out into the streets. The bells ringing furiously; every one was hurrying away to church and chapel—I myself languidly wandered to a church or chapel, according to my own special rite. There was a kind of frosty sun abroad, and it might be called a cheerful day on the whole. For them I have no doubt it was. There was a festive look over the men and women of the congregation (we all know that Christmas morning look—born of the special good-humour of the season), and even the children seemed to say, ‘We have pudding for dinner to-day—orders to an unlimited extent will be taken.’

I came back; I read the pantomime posters again on the dead walls: many boys were reading them too, with a sort of unctuous licking off their lips, as though it was the dinner list. There were many houses—the Prince of Wales among the rest—who offered two columbines to public notice; and I distinctly recall the name of the leading lady of the ballet, under whose ‘sole direction’ that branch of the entertainment had been pro-

duced, ‘Miss Mc’Gusty of the Theatres Royal London and Bath.’

I came back. In the bar I saw the landlord, John Duntun—J. D., bright and busy, shining as though he had been well burnished up with plate powder and a polishing brush. Sunbeams of good-humour played over his face. I found comfort in speaking to him.

‘We have absolutely nobody dining in the hotel,’ he said, ‘to-day. A most unfortunate accident: so odd. My son-in-law, Brown, dines with us to-day. We have a noble pudding. Mrs. D. mixed the suet and currants two months ago.’

I found a relief in telling him my story. He said it was unlucky: I said it was wretched. He agreed with me. He was a plain man; but no—it was no matter. He must speak to Mrs. D. for a moment.

Two P.M.: I went up to the coffee-room (odious chamber). The horrid monotony of its objects began to affect me. The Worcestershire sauce, so stolid and imperturbable, irritated me. I went over to the chimneypiece and read the Royal Impartial Insurance Co.’s programme again. I began to be familiar with the directors: the name of the Chairman amused me grimly, ‘The Lord Leightonbuzzard.’

I discovered, too, an unworthy ruse. In the sketch of the office at Quebec or Montreal a public building next door was brought in prominently, misleading the spectator or possible insurer. The ‘Ironstown Albion,’ five days old, was on the table; and I thought of addressing a letter of exposure to the editor.

Four o’clock: Darkness was beginning: a calm, gloomy, cosy-like Christmas darkness. The lamps were being lighted again. I began to think of Plusher and his merry house. What festival was just setting in! what high jinks! He always had a bursting house: young girls, young boys, young ladies, young children—young everybody. Plusher’s Christmas was known to all—so warm, so genial, so jovial! By dwelling on the details of the picture I reduced myself to the very verge of despair. There was a large carver lying on the sideboard!

Four-twenty: Scarcely secure from the horrid suggestions presented by the carver. I went down again to the bar. An unusual bustle pervaded that department. An unusual savour proceeded from some indistinct direction within. I had just a glimpse of something with gorgeous ribbons, and timidly asked, was that Mrs. Dunton.

'You are going to be very happy, Dunton,' I said. 'You will have a pleasant, warm, social meeting: holly, redberries, pudding, and all the rest of it.'

I turned away sadly, and went up to the gaol coffee-room. It had grown dusky, and the sauce-bottle stood out indistinctly. I began to feel towards them as the late Mr. Poe did to his raven. I discovered another in a corner. 'Bottle,' said I, 'thing of evil, bottle, be thou bird or devil—.' Thus adapting that powerful lyric to the situation; but I was fast breaking down. It was a ghastly attempt: I felt horribly dispirited and gloomy; and the human imagination began to rest with equanimity on the large carver.

Suddenly the perked waiter entered. Please, sir, a note. I took it from him calmly. It ran to this effect:

** Royal Angel Hotel,
Christmas Day.*

'Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Dunton request the pleasure of Mr. H. Guest's company to dinner at half-past five. They expect Mr. Brown, J. W. D.'s son-in-law, and a few friends.

'An answer will oblige.'

I wrote an answer with enthusiasm. Mr. H. Guest would have the honour. Three quarters of the load seemed taken from my heart. I went to my room, unpacked, and dressed as I would for a ball, to do as much honour as I could to these good, considerate people. I found myself getting a little cheerful as I dressed. I went down at half-past five, and was announced in all form by the perked waiter.

The good nature, the kindness, the heartiness of these honest folk I shall never forget. The first view,

as it might be called, was even inspiring. J. D. himself, in a white waistcoat, warned you better than his own fire. There were J. D.'s children—five in number—graduated ages, J. D.'s grandfather, J. D.'s wife's grandmother; J. D.'s wife's cousin; and J. D.'s own son-in-law, Brown, an honest, cheerful soul, with a turn for jokes, and who came with his wife.

I took in Mrs. J. W. Dunton—this compliment being due to my quality as guest. As we arranged ourselves at table we got 'clubbed,' and there was a roar—a compound roar made up of many keys, bass and treble. We tried to deploy: and Mrs. J. W. and I, moving towards the same seat, mutually sat down upon one another. A roar again—rather a shriek. These little incidents I merely mention to give an idea of the tone of mind of the company.

I spent a very happy evening. We had roast beef, a noble pudding (that long putting-by of the materials was indeed judicious), and a turkey which really rivalled the Irish bird in its capacity of being 'fit to draw a gig.' The strength of limb in this remarkable creature would have rendered it not disproportionate to a good-sized brougham. We had songs and merriment, and a stream of laughter, as J. D. himself put it happily 'always on tap.' The children were charming, and everybody was agreeable.

At half-past twelve we shook hands all round; and J. D. himself took me up-stairs to the best room in his house, and left me sitting at a cheerful fire, in a very cheerful and grateful mood.

I often think that when I come to making my will—a disagreeable operation, which I put off as long as I can—that I will put in the following bequest: 'And I do further give and bequeath to John Dunton, of the Royal Angel Hotel, Irons-town, the sum of fifty pounds as a trifling token of my sense of his good nature on a certain Christmas Day.'

P. F.

THE SNOWY CHRISTMAS.



SNOWED up in a lonely inn amongst Irish mountains, the writer of this little record paid a dreamy heed to the loose scraps of romantic retrospect which floated about from the lips of those who came and went about the hearth-place. They leaped and fell in fitful snatches, just as did the blaze in the shadows; and amongst the rest the following little history glimmered forth from the smoke, and wrought itself for the listener into a lasting shape in the embers. Referring to the fearful fall of 18—, which is remembered with horror in the district, they called it the story of the Snowy Christmas. Knowing what the words mean, it seems hard to turn one's eyes from the blank of the end, and dash warmly into the beginning: for the beginning was

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warm and bright, and this page should open, as a small door opens, into a garden of sunshine.

It was August, the glorious golden month. Hills were flushed with crimson ether, and glens were dim with purple mystery. Valley rivers ran red at sunset, and rainbows hung about the waterfalls. The bronzed corn-fields palpitated faint for joy when a stray breeze crept over a hedge and fanned their hot hearts, and in the cabin doorways the women joined their brown hands above their eyes whilst looking for the reapers coming home.

It was a sultry afternoon. The curlews on the burning beach below had not energy to scream as the flowing tide flashed like fire to their feet, where they perched luxuriously on the wet stones, and the fisher-

men's boats drifted idly out into the dazzling western haze, as though toil and trouble were a bygone dream, and they steered to the shores of eternal rest. High up on a stretch of golden moor a white cottage flung the shadow of its gable on the hot ground, and the faint smoke from its chimney hovered sleepily above in the lustrous air. The door lay open, and the threshold-stone was boldly marked with a red breadth of light. Beyond it there was a cool little hall, at present deliciously filled with the murmurous echoes of a pleasant voice ebbing and flowing from somewhere near. A white door opened from either side of the passage. In one of the rooms beyond these, a pretty little chintz-draped parlour, a pale lady was lying on a sofa. A great vase of fern stood beside her on the floor, and the green blinds were half let down, filling the place with a cool, dreamy atmosphere. The other room was the cottage kitchen, tiny, white, and glittering. A strong-featured old woman, wearing a brilliant handkerchief folded like a turban over her white cap, sat by the hearth tending some cakes which were 'browning' over the fire, and at the white-curtained window, flung wide open to the top, a young girl was baking at a table. Her gown was brown gingham, no brooch fastened her collar, a white apron was tied round her waist, and her sleeves were rolled up over her arms, past her elbows. Many housemaids would have been discontented to wear her dress, yet a glance must convince the most dull of comprehension that this little baker was a lady.

She prattled gaily as she baked, now and again tossing her head to shake back the waving dark hair from her throat and forehead, or flashing round a merry look from her bright face at the old servant.

'It's very ominous certainly,' she said, cutting out her cakes with an air of mock seriousness; 'the tongs have twice fallen right across the hearth without any awkwardness of yours, therefore most surely a stranger is to come. And then you

had an awful dream last week, which makes it doubly sure that if a stranger does come something terrible will be the consequence. What do you think he will do, Bab—decapitate us all? or bring an enchanter's wand, and change us into ducks and geese? That would not be so bad this hot weather. It would be so nice to swim in the lake all day!'

Bab shook her head. 'It's all very well for you to have your fun out of it, Miss Elsie,' she said, 'but I hope he mayn't darken our door: that's all!'

Elsie laughed blithely as she untied her apron, and laughed again as she ran up the one little flight of white-painted steps to her small bedroom under the eaves. Coming quickly down again, in her outdoor dress, with a basket in her hand, she looked in at the kitchen, and said—

'I am going for some moss and flowers, Bab. Have the kettle boiling, for mamma will want her tea. And, Bab, if I meet the stranger I'll send him to you. Oh, perhaps he is coming to take The House!'

Not waiting to see the result of this suggestion, Elsie tripped through the door out on the sunny heath. 'The House' was a large pile, standing solitary in a wooded recess between hills, not far distant. It stood upon the lands of Elsie's ancestors, and the setting sun was just now blazing on the windows of her old nursery. In that nursery Bab had sung her to sleep and taught her her prayers; and if Elsie's bright youth cared little that her life had fallen from its worldly high estate, the faithful servant fretted sorely over the cruel chance, and could not tolerate the idea of a stranger in the old house.

Elsie sauntered slowly along in the sun, filling her basket with mosses and water-lilies. She stood up to her waist amongst the rushes, and, shading her eyes, gazed round and round the welkin. All the earth was quiet; heavily, sultrily still, and at rest. Eternal ridges of mountains prisoned it between purple walls. A dull fever throbbed in its veins, but there was no effort, no varied action. Elsie had heard of the 'busy world,' and often won-

dered what it must be to behold the works of men, to be one in a crowd, to have variety in one's days, to see new faces, to make new friends. 'It is so still,' she murmured; 'so eternally, intolerably still. Nothing changing, nothing renewing, nothing passing away. Nature going through her slow, monotonous courses; time making us older; and still the same dull, dull, quiet life! Oh, that I had a pair of wings to fly over yonder mountain, with its smiling, denying face, half amused at and half pitying my restlessness, or that I could paddle a boat right over that golden line, out so far, where the ships pass like ghosts! There are plenty of paths to cloudland streaming down the air in coloured labyrinths ending in golden vistas; and they are crowded with travellers, fancies, and wishes, and hopes, coming and going; but on that one weary, drowsy, yellow road that leads out into the world where men and women live and work there is never a shadow, never a speck! Bab's tongs!' she repeated, smiling to herself. 'I wish some one—man, woman, or child—would come and rouse us up a little, before we die of stagnation. Heigho! Mamma says she had plenty of friends once; but nobody minds us now. Well! I don't care; only one does tire of baking bread, and gathering flowers, and going out for walks. And I wish I had not read that novel. It was a delightful treat, but I don't think it was good for me.'

She smiled again as she came near the house, and looked up at the windows. 'Now, if I were in earnest with all this grumbling,' she said, 'how wicked I should be! For it is a blessed thing to have such a pleasant little home to come to, and a dear, patient mother waiting for her tea!'

At this moment Bab appeared on the threshold gesticulating wildly and mysteriously.

'Why, what is the matter?' cried Elsie.

'He's come!' gasped Bab, while her turban nodded with frenzied impulse.

'Who?' asked Elsie, opening her eyes wide.

'The stranger. He came up the road a bit ago, as tall and as grand as you please. And he asks, "Is this Mrs. Leonard's house?" And I don't know what come over me that I said "Yes," or I might have sent him about his business. But he's in the parlour; and oh! Miss Elsie, dear, hurry in and get him out of this as fast as you can!'

Bab opened the parlour door, and Elsie advanced to it, mechanically, quite bewildered, and only half understanding the old servant, only half prepared to see a real stranger in the room with her mother. She walked in, fresh and bright after her ramble, with her curly hair, somewhat tossed, straying in picturesque rings and tendrils from under her slouched hat, and with her basket of mosses on her arm. A gentleman was sitting by her mother's couch, and as he rose up at her entrance the girl almost sank into the earth with shyness. She heard her mother say, 'Elsie, this is Mr. North, the son of your father's friend who went to India. He has only been a short time in England, and has kindly come to see us.'

Elsie, having nothing to say, gave him her hand, and then sat down. Too shy to look, she sat gazing at the fire and listening to the pleasant bass voice which was so unheard-of a novelty in that small parlour. She fell into a reverie of pleased wonder at the strange, new sensation of having a friend. Where had he come from? Had he really travelled that speckless yellow road; or had he landed with a fleet in the bay, or strode across the hills?

'You are not perhaps aware,' said Elsie's mother, 'that there is no hotel for very many miles from here. If you will accept such mountain hospitality as we have to offer it will be given most gladly.'

The pale lady said this with a pink flush on her white cheek, whilst there hovered about her an echo of that sweet, stately dignity which in past years had so well become the mistress of 'The House.'

And then the stranger, having gladly accepted the invitation, went into the hall to look after his gun;

and Elsie, trying to shake off her bewilderment, went upstairs to lay aside her hat. She brushed back her curls, and shook out her dress, and tied a blue ribbon under her collar, and then her toilet was complete; for Elsie in summer time, except on Sundays, never thought of wearing anything better than a gingham gown. As she came down stairs the stranger stood at the open hall-door, and Elsie, having conquered her first impulse to turn and fly up again, came soberly down, and saw him plainly for the first time; for before he had only been to her a vague, kindly presence. He was tall and strongly made, handsome and brave-looking, with a bronzed skin and sunny eyes. The light fell on the little maiden herself as she came down the stairs with a strange spell checking her steps and veiling the frank light in her eyes. Elsie did not realize what a miniature place it must seem to him altogether, this travelled man: a miniature house, and a miniature young lady (not more so in stature than in the very small amount of the usual requirements which sufficed to proclaim her the lady) who dared to wear gingham at tea-time, and yet approached with as stately a little step as though she were clad in silks and laces. Philip North must however have found it a pleasant picture which the sunset illumined before him, for his eyes kindled, and a delicate thrill of appreciation hovered tenderly on his lip. Elsie tried to say something polite as she passed close by, but meeting those warm observant eyes fixed upon her she relapsed into shyness, and retreated to the kitchen, where Bab was preparing tea.

A glass dish of water-lilies stood in the centre of the tea-table, and Philip North said, 'I think I saw you gathering these.' They were the first words he had spoken to her; and Elsie coloured and overflowed a cup, and then looked up in surprise and said, 'Did you? Where?'

'Down by the side of a little lake. And after you had got them you stood for a long time in a brown study, looking at the sky.'

And this was all the conversation they had till after tea. Then Elsie's mother, having conversed too much and too eagerly for her strength, lay resting on her sofa; and Elsie, looking out into the starry shades of the twilight from the open window, forgot her reserve, and found herself talking quite frankly to the stranger, telling him how she spent her time (not concealing the fact that she baked the bread), what books she read, and a number of other small things too trifling to be recorded. And then the moon appeared between two mountains, large and yellow in the soft purple night; and Philip North enraptured Elsie by telling her that he had beheld no finer scene in any land. Then he described to her countries whose very names made her cheek throb. Poor little Elsie! that was a night never to be forgotten while the light stayed in those earnest eyes.

One evening soon afterwards it happened that Elsie came to the door just as Philip North arrived from the moors with his gun and his dogs and his day's spoil. He stooped and laid the dead game at her feet, and passed on to put away his gun. Some wild idea suggesting the poem of 'Hiawatha' flashed fiercely through her brain, and sent a fearful delight tingling through her veins. She stood pale and trembling, like one who had got a blow, then rushed upstairs, and threw herself on her bed in a passion of tears—why, she did not dare to know. She felt something cold on her face, and looking up saw one of Philip's dogs staring at her with mute sympathy. She leaned forward to kiss his rough face, but checked herself, pushed him fiercely from her, and drove him from the room.

Weeks passed, and still Philip North stayed, and still Mrs. Leonard observing him, weighing his words and his looks, and studying his character—still Elsie's mother was glad that he stayed. And even Bab had forgotten her dream and blessed him for a kindly gentleman. And Elsie, tripping happily about her household work, did not care if he saw her through the open window

baking her bread; nor was she ashamed when one day he came in and asked her for one of her cakes, fresh from the fire. And so her life wore on towards that sunniest point where the glad feet were to stop, where the music was to be hushed, and the light to go down. Oh, dead eyes! if you can look back on life, how do you thank God for the blissful brightness that blinded you to the end and let the grave open beneath you unawares!

Was it the creeping on of the shadow of death, that restlessness which would not let Elsie be happy in 'peace? or was it the ghost of Bab's foolish superstition rising after she herself had laid it? At evening, when she closed the door upon the sad mountains, Elsie longed so to shut out the world that they three might stay together thus for ever. At night she lay broad awake assuring herself 'Our friend is here.' Then the shadow would reply, 'How long will he be here? He will go, and you will never behold him again, never, never, till the last trumpet shall sound.' And weary and feverish she would rise when the dawn had swept away the night-clouds, and in the fresh pale morning, while the birds chirruped sleepily under the eaves, she would haunt the restful house, stealing out to feed and pet Philip's dogs; and then in again to watch the sunrise, now from one window and now from another, reading the pale scrolls of early clouds, and wondering at how recklessly we sleep away half our bright youth, drowning in dull dreams happy moments whose fast-waning measure has been meted out to us with a nice balance. And at last when her eyes grew pained with vigil she would steal to the garden and bring a handful of flowers and place them on her pillow, and, laying her cheek against their cool sweetness, would fall asleep.

One day Elsie, having been down on the beach, came in with a glorious light on her face and told her mother a story, over which the pale lady cried, as women sometimes do when very happy. But Elsie could only look out upon the mountains with a transfigured countenance, and whis-

per triumphantly, 'What can come now, unless death?' The glory vanished from her face and she crept away to pray for that which God saw not right to give.

Philip North bought 'The House,' and thither Elsie's mother was to return in the spring, when Elsie had become its mistress. So, being mercifully blinded, they planned in the gladness of their hearts. And Elsie went with Philip one evening to view the old place and arrange about alterations and furnishing. She went in her pretty simple dress and straw hat, walking by Philip's side over the moors, and through the wood, and across the threshold into the deserted house, flinging back shutters, and letting in the light, and making the silent old rooms ring back the echoes of her quick feet and merry voice. And so they agreed how this room and that should be appointed, and Philip made notes of all, for he was going back to the world to make many arrangements before Christmas Day, which was to see their wedding.

November came and Philip went, and in the joy of receiving his first letter Elsie forgot the pain of parting. One week went by, wet and dreary, and the next set in with heavy snows; falling, falling, whirling and drifting night and day, till dykes were filled up, and roads were blocked, and all landmarks were lost. On the first white morning Elsie stood at the window, with some dainty needlework in her hand, watching and smiling at the eddying flakes, thinking little of how soon their cruel white sting would freeze up her young life, how soon the pitiless drifts would seal her dead eyes.

There were no more letters; the mails were stopped. Thick and unceasing the snow fell. The valleys, like overflowing seas, rose to the knees of the mountains. Dwellers in the lowlands fled for shelter to their friends on the hills and forgot where their homes had been. Streams and rivers lay congealed like blood in the veins of the dead.

Every morning the day stared in at Elsie with its white blank face where she sat holding her mother's

hand—her mother, whom the long piercing cold of that cruel snow was killing, whilst with daily sullen denial it forbade all aid to approach her. Day after day she sat so, holding the thin hand while weeks went on and December was half spent, gazing out at the imploring hills and the mourning trees, trying to pray with patient courage while her eyes searched the relentless sky in vain for mercy.

Downstairs a lamp burned constantly in the garnished parlour. Christmas decorations had been made, and white curtains were looped with the red and green of the holly. Bab kept the fire burning and the lamp trimmed, and Elsie stole down now and again to see that all was neat and bright, for the thaw might come any day, and Philip might arrive, and her mother recover.

And the pale lady who lay upstairs, knowing herself to be dying, spoke bright words to the child whom she feared to leave lonely, urging her to omit no preparation, to have all things brightly in readiness, so that when the thaw should come and Philip arrive, her own wasting life might yet have a little time to burn, even until she beheld that which her heart craved to see accomplished.

'Christmas Day will be bright, love,' she would murmur, stroking the faithful little hand that held hers so strongly, as if it would not give up its grasp to death. 'I dreamed this morning that the day had come, and the sun was shining, and you and I were both dressed in white, and I was quite well again. I know it will be a bright day!'

And then the pale lady would turn her fast-changing face to where she could see the chimneys of her old home, and, thinking who knows what thoughts of the happy days passed under its roof-tree, she would gaze away above the white hills beyond with the eyes of one whose soul goes with them, trying to learn the track, trying to grow accustomed to the path by which it soon must go on its lonely journey to the unknown land.

And so the hearth was swept and

the walls were garnished, and the lamp and fire burned brightly downstairs; and above, Elsie's white dress lay in her room like a wreath from the pitiless snow outside, which had drifted in through the window and remained there undisturbed. And the wind moaned round the house, rattling at the locks of the doors as if to warn that one was coming to whom closed doors were nothing. And that one came in the dead of a dark night and summoned the pale lady from sleep. And opening her eyes, she recognized the call, and, riveting one last prayerful gaze upon the dear face beside her, she turned her own from the world and followed the messenger.

Oh, pulseless earth! oh, tearless sky! you had no pity for the longing life that would fain have lingered yet a little space, how then could you melt for the unpraying dead that lay there, meekly defying you in its shroud, with its patient hands folded, waiting so stilly till you vouchsafed it a grave; or for the stricken figure that sat at its feet with a brain dulled from studying hour by hour the changed features in their unsympathizing repose, where all the flood-gates of warmth had been suddenly locked and set with the seal of that chill, unheeding smile?

So Elsie sat at her dead mother's feet, and old Bab came and went heartbroken, and could not coax her to weep nor to rest. And still the wedding gown lay in the next room, and the lamp burned downstairs, and the wind rattled at the locks, and still the earth and sky were a blank.

At last the thaw commenced slowly to work. Life began to appear, and passages were cleared here and there. And one or two of those kind Christians, the poor, with difficulty found Elsie's mother a grave. And after that was done, Elsie, shunning the garnished parlour and the lorn bedroom, crept into the kitchen and laid her head on Bab's knees.

Late in the evening she roused herself and asked if it was not Christmas Eve. Yes, it was the eve of her wedding-day.

'Then, Bab,' she said, 'we must

have everything ready. Mr. North will be here to-night.'

Bad shook her head. 'No, no, Miss Elsie. The thaw has done something, but not so much as that. It's dark already, and no human bein' could know his way from the moor beyond where the roads cross. He'd most likely take the one that goes out to the Black Crag, and if he did he'd go down headlong as sure as heaven and earth!'

Elsie sat up straight and stared at the old woman, and then put up her hand to her head as if to collect her poor shattered wits.

'Some one must go,' she said, 'and watch on the moor all night, to show him the way when he comes. He will be there as sure as God is above us. I feel it, Bab! I know it! Cannot some one go?'

'Oh, no, no, Miss Elsie!' cried Bab, wringing her hands at her young mistress's white distraught face; 'no one could stay there the night through, he'd be foundered dead before mornin'.'

'You are sure of it? Ask some one; I must know.'

Bab went to inquire, and came back. It was as she had said; no one dared venture to pass a night on the moor. The snow might come on again at any moment.

'Then God help me!' moaned Elsie, as she crept from the kitchen and felt her way up stairs in the dark. She went into her own room, where the wedding-gown still lay, and she could see from the window that line of moor where the roads met. There, with hands locked in her lap, and strained eyes fixed on the distance, and white cheek close to the pane, she sat. The sky had cleared a little, and the moon had ventured out, looking pale and meek, as if she, too, had had her troubles and wept away all her brightness.

Twelve o'clock struck; and Bab, who had vainly tried to move her mistress, had perforce laid her own weary old head on a bed in the room off Elsie's and fallen asleep. One o'clock, and the night had brightened, and the moon shone clear and brilliant on the white ridges and levels of mountains and valleys. Two, and still Elsie sat fixed, and

nothing had changed. Three, and the moon began to sink away among cloud-drifts low on the hills.

Four struck in the hall, and the sound roused Elsie from a state of numbness like stupor into which she had fallen. Was it the shock that made her start to her feet and, with bent brows and strained eyes, gaze towards the moor, whilst all her frame shook with the agony of suspense? Was it fate that pointed to her a black something moving in the dim distance like one riding on with difficulty? Another instant and the window is flung open and head and shoulders are thrust out. A low groan, 'My God!' bursts from her as the shadow seems to pause and then move away into that dim distance. Fleet as thought she has left the window, dashed from the room, and is gone.

Till her death poor old Bab remembered with remorse how heavily she slept that night, till she seemed to dream that Miss Elsie's figure flashed past her through the room in which she lay. The vision made her sleep uneasily, and she awoke troubled, and, rising to reassure herself, searched the house for her young mistress. In vain; one room was empty, and another was empty. Elsie was gone.

Who shall tell where? The moor-fowls that screamed past her as she struggled on, fired to supernatural effort by the strength of her purpose, plunging through snow-wreaths, stumbling over fences and clogged marshes, with her eyes fixed on those Black Crag? Or the moon that pitied her as she fell and bled, and rose and fought on again, as she must have done terribly, piteously often, ere those fatal rocks were won?

Oh, those pitiless white wastes, how they must have frozen the blood in that brave battling young heart! How they must have stung that daring soul with bitter wounds ere it could acknowledge its defeat! How they must have torn the plodding feet with treacherous stones and rocks ere they carried her to her goal—death!

But the moon waned, and the grey Christmas dawn broke, and a

traveller, riding with difficulty along the partially-cleared road, paused suddenly, thinking he heard his own name called, a sharp, clear, bitter cry, fading suddenly into silence—
'Philip! Philip!'

He wheeled about and gazed seaward, just as the red sun bared his brow above the eastern mountains, and glared fiercely over the crimson-stained wastes of whiteness like a ruthless conqueror exulting after the carnage is done. And, out, out far, just by the Black Crag, he thought he saw a slight dark figure standing in the red light against the snow. But his eyes were dazed with the sun, and when he looked again the form was gone. He pressed on his horse eagerly and thought no more of his odd fancy.

'Philip! Philip!' Oh, that last woeful cry, falling unheeded into stillness just as the poor heart broke! And he, the watched and prayed for, entered at last that garnished home; but the hearth that had glowed so brightly for him all through the

long, long weeks was quenched for ever, and the heart whose love had fed its flame, and the fingers that had trimmed the lamp, and the lips that had kissed the little love-gifts lying about, where were they?

Ay, where? Who shall guess from what hollow gulf of snow, from the feet of what cruel rock, the tide carried the dead girl? The sea-gulls may scream her *misereres*, and the waves roll their muffled drums over her head, but no human mourner will ever kneel at her grave, for the body of Elsie Leonard was never found.

Philip North still lives, but, wherever he goes the vision of that figure out on the snow in the red dawn will haunt him till death, and the echo of that last bitter cry, 'Philip! Philip!' ring in his ears.

This is the story of the Snowy Christmas. It is told over the logs in the cabins at night; and children will turn pale if, in the wintry gloaming, a plover sobs from seaward or a curlew cries over the Black Crag.

R. M.



PICTURESQUE LONDON.

No. I.—FROM THE GOLDEN GALLERY.

'I have vowed to spend all my life in London. People do really live nowhere else; they breathe, and move, and have a kind of insipid, dull being, but there is no life but in London.'—*Epsom Wells*, by T. Shadwell, 1676.



AM not a musician, not even a student of music, nor, so say my detractors, a lover of music. They glose over this bit of criticism, and hug themselves with delight; they point at me the finger of scorn, and they shrug the shoulders of contempt, and they laugh the sneer of spite as they say to each other, 'Look at him! he don't know Beethoven, from Mozart, nor Sebastian Bach from Donizetti; he has no soul for music!' I don't know whether I have; I do know that when people play sonatas and motetts and symphonies I go to sleep; and that when they play *tunes*—say the '*Che farò*,' from Gluck's '*Orfeo*,' or the '*Harmonious Blacksmith*,' or anything from '*Lucrezia*' or '*Lucia*,' my tears flow very easily, and I can sit and listen to them by the hour.

I am afraid I have a weakness for tune; I have no doubt that a perpetual tumty-tum without definite object or aim is a good thing; but then a little of it goes a long way. I become thoroughly somnolent before a symphony is one third played; whereas I can bear to hear my favourite tunes over and over again. I sit placidly by, and murmur *da capo*. It is one of the few bits of Italian I know, and it has been learnt from patiently standing over young ladies' shoulders at the piano, and turning over the leaves of their music-books when they give an impatient kind of jerk; for I cannot read the notes, and should be otherwise quite abroad. I know, too, its meaning—'all over again,' or 'from the beginning;' and that is why I have begun this essay in this manner, simply because it is all *da capo*. *Da capo*, ladies and gentlemen! all over again! If I don't call it out you will accuse me of it; and it is much better to confess your own crime than to have it narrated by somebody else. Picturesque 'London,' you will say; 'don't we know all about it? haven't we had enough of London sketches, and London people, and London life? have we not had books about London, ancient and modern? can we not refer to Strype and Hollinshed, to Strutt and Stow, and Camden and Burgess? have we not Ned Ward, "the London Spy," Asmodeus-like, to unroof the houses for us? Will this writer be able to combine the vigour of Johnson with the soundness of Addison, the playfulness of Steele, the sentiment of Goldsmith—all of whom have written about London? can he prattle as pleasantly as Mr. Secretary Pepys, as quaintly as Evelyn? does he know as much of low life and the "fancy" as did Mr. Pierce Egan, when he sketched, "Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London," for our delectation? is he prepared to give us the antiquarian research of Mr. Peter Cunningham, or the life-long labours of Mr. John Timbs? Finally, has he the faculty for observation, the wondrous memory, the power of transcribing his impressions, possessed by Mr. George Augustus Sala, who has given a closely-written description of the twenty-four hours of the day and night as passed in London, in his "Twice round the Clock?"

Picturesque London, does this new sketcher say? We have had it all before, and are not going to have it all over again.'

In all meekness and humility I cry you mercy, and beseech you to think no such hard things. I have read the authors, and the books you quote, and am thoroughly aware of my inability to cope with them; therefore I make no such pretence. While they, purple-clad and palfrey-riding, caracole down the grand streets, we shall slip by back ways, and tread devious lanes; while they float in golden galleys in mid Thames, we shall take oars at Hungerford, and dodge in and out, floating with the tide, and seeing all sorts of quaint out-o'-the-way bits that in their grand voyage they pass by: the noise of the band on board their worships' barge is so great as to drown half the human cries which shall reach us, floating in our little boat: the awning to keep the sun from my lord and his friends hides numerous little nooks into which we shall penetrate, and prevents many glimpses of odd bits of light and shade, of glow here and reflection there, which in our little skiff we catch: the accommodation is of the homeliest, and you may chance to sit on an ill-swabbed seat; but I believe the craft is safe; and at all events we will keep a sharp look-out ahead, and take care not to run foul of any one else.

Again, I purpose to write of Picturesque London; and forthwith I am assailed by a yelping chorus of curs, all protesting against the analogy of the two words. 'Picturesque! do you know what the word means?' they ask; 'do you know how Webster defines it?' "Expressing that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture, natural or artificial; striking the mind with great power or pleasure in representing objects of vision, and in pointing to the imagination any circumstance or event as clearly as if delineated in a picture." Are you going to fulfil all this with your pen? Spare me, gentlemen! Spare me for one minute, and hear what I purpose doing. Dr. Syntax made a tour in search of the picturesque, a course

which has since been extensively followed by many who have been by no means so successful; and in my own experience I have seen many men who left for Switzerland, Norway, Italy, the Nile, all with the same view, who have returned with equally small results. Now, I make no tour at all; my steed is Shanks's mare; my saddle-bags dwindle down into a cigar-case; my hotel expenses resolve themselves into fourpence for a glass of beer and a sandwich at an Alton a-house; my letters of credit are a few shillings in my portemonnaie; and I have no passport. I leave my home when I list—when my usual work is done, if I list, or in early mornings or pleasant afternoons; and I find myself snugly ensconced in the club in time for the second joint, or cheerfully slippered and shooting-coated at the domestic dinner-table. And as for the picturesque, ah! friend and brother, not merely in Alpine mountains or Italian plains lies the picturesque; not merely in trellised vines or purple hill-side, or stormbeaten ruin, not merely in unkempt *lazzaroni*, or long-haired *Burschen*, or snowy-chemiseted *jödling mädchen*; not merely in jack-booted postilions, or tight corporals of the line, or Arab pipe-bearers, or turbaned Turks. I have seen fine bits of the picturesque from Southwark Bridge, and have marked them in the lanes of Wapping; I have seen the picturesque on the Royal Exchange and in the Stone Yard of Newgate Gaol; I have noted it in the alderman's purple, and in the beggar's rags; in the moonlight on the Pool, and in the trembling reflection of the gas on the wet pavement; in windy railway cuttings, and at dreary stations; in lamp-lit streets, and solemn squares; in Quakers' meeting-houses and public gatherings, I have seen it; but keep your eyes open and watch for it, and only have the soul to appreciate it when it comes, and you will not be long in looking for the picturesque even in London.

It is a bad thing, I thought to myself when I had decided on carrying out this idea, to start with a determination. If you say 'I will do'

such and such a thing, ten chances to one if you accomplish it at all, or at least in a satisfactory manner. Happiness, or perhaps more properly pleasure, comes by chance. How many devised schemes of having it have failed; and how successful have been the unthought-of pic-nic parties, dinners, balls, water excursions, long rides, and consequent flirtations, which have 'turned up' by chance! Mr. Micawber had more sense than we generally give him credit for when he waited for something 'to turn up;' and he proved right in the end, as he was enabled to emigrate very comfortably at other people's expense. So, in my search for the picturesque, I determined to make no settled rule or plans, but just simply to leave to chance the direction of my footsteps, certain to find my object before I had gone far. I am not certain that there was not something very picturesque, as I emerged, in the aspect of the quaint old houses in Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn (the backs of them, I mean), glowing ruddily in the morning sun, like jolly red-faced giants, with their windows trembling like eyes. The grass, too, in the Gray's Inn Gardens is fresh and green, and the fine old trees are the best town imitations of forest oaks and elms. Dotted with very town-made children and dumpy, slatternly housemaids are the walks; noses, too, are, I observe, prominent, which means that middle-class Jewry—a cut below Russell and Tavistock Squares, and a cut above the Minorities and Houndsditch—live in Guildford, Coram, and Ormond Streets, and send their Hebraic offspring to play in Gray's Inn Gardens. Ah! the different company seen by the brave old trees when the Gardens were a fashionable promenade, in Charles II.'s time; when Buckingham may have bowed beneath them, whispering soft nothings into the ear of some fair citizeness; when, perchance, the olive complexion and the black eyes of the king himself may have been shaded by them as he stole by on one of his expeditious *incog.*; when bustling little Pepys may have potted about, taking note of the prome-

naders, and 'observing fashions of the ladies, because of my wife making some clothes;' or pretty Nelly Gwynne crossed them rapidly on her way to the theatre. Later still, too, they were places of resort, for it was in Gray's Inn Walk that the Spectator found Sir Roger de Coverley 'hemming twice or thrice to himself with great vigour, for he loves to clear his pipes in good air.' Through Gray's Inn Gate, where Jacob Tonson lived, and where a newspaper-shop is even now; so down Fleet Street—Brain Street now—where in the course of the day you may see half the intellect of London threading its way in and out, and rushing up dark courts into newspaper-offices and publishers' shops, up the hill of Lud, choked with the dust blown from the down-coming houses sacrificed to the Dover and Chatham Railway; and now we catch two picturesque views, one of St. Martin's Church, and the other just after passing the bend of the hill, of St. Paul's. St. Paul's! dullard that thou art, that is the place whence to take the first picturesque glance over London! Up there, at once! up to the Golden Gallery!

Lingering one minute to look in at the pretty picture-books in the shop of Messrs. Griffith and Farran, worthy successors of kind, philanthropic, pimple-faced John Newbery, to whose love for children we owe the publication of 'Goody Two Shoes;' glancing at the hideous statue of Queen Anne, as she appeared in her celebrated trick of balancing the globe and sceptre; past the corner where so long the smell from the melting-house in Paternoster Row overcame the odour of the Bath buns in the pastry-cook's, and whence their blent perfume sickened the passer-by, I pass on through Paul's Churchyard until I come to the south door of Paul himself; and after going up a flight of steps broad and originally handsome, but now patched and mended, uncared-for, and in shameful condition, I enter through a very shabby-looking door into the cathedral.

Have you ever been there? If you be a Londoner, I will wager you half a dozen pairs of gloves or a

new hat (according to your sex) that you have not, and you shall get my address at the office of 'London Society,' and there shall be no chicanery in the matter. If you be a provincial, and have come up with a ten days' excursion ticket, and have been staying with friends during the season, or passed a vacation in town, then of course you've seen everything; been up the Monument and down the Thames Tunnel, visited Madame Tussaud's and the Colosseum, and the Polytechnic, and various other wondrous places whither the feet of the true London denizen never stray. What an odd thing it is, that, given the power of realizing a pleasure, a distaste for, or at least a lull in the wish for that pleasure, come simultaneously! Every year we Londoners rush away to the sea-shore for sea-bathing, give up our comfortable homes, and poke ourselves into wretched lodgings or scantily-furnished, windy, draughty, melancholy houses, for the sake of a twenty-minutes' dip every morning and a promenade on the seashore every afternoon; while the regular inhabitants of the watering-place never dream of bathing, and unless they live by lodging-letting, withdraw themselves as far as possible from the sea. And when provincials come to London, they rush off at once, and make out every spare hour of their stay in visiting amusements which the Londoner only knows from the advertisements, and which bud, and blossom, and fade, without his having had any further acquaintance with them than that gleaned from a perusal of the hoardings and dead walls. So it is in every case. I have a friend a theatrical manager, who tells me that there are several men whose presence in his theatre would be gall and wormwood to him, men who inspire him with feelings akin to those which the gaping pig and the harmless necessary cat evoke in others. What does he do? Does he forbid his money-takers to receive their money? Does he caution his cheek-takers to keep a wary look-out lest they should invade his precincts? No; at the commencement of every season he sends round

a note to each of them, telling them that he has placed them on his free list, and the consequence is that they never come near him. Having the power and privilege of walking in at any time, they never walk in at all.

I must walk in, however, and at once, if my pilgrimage is to be worth anything. Thirty years, 'man and boy,' as country folks say, have I lived in London, and never have been inside St. Paul's. I was once at the annual meeting of the charity children, when, so far as the cathedral is concerned, the gathering might have taken place anywhere else. I have reminiscences of bygone humour in the columns of 'Punch,' and am prepared to pay twopence for entrance money, and to be severe upon the exacting meanness of the Dean and Chapter; but the shabby swing door opens with my push, and on inquiring of a shabby man in a fur cap who ascends the steps immediately after me as to the charge, I learn that 'it have been took off, and parties is let in gratis now.' I suppose I may conclude that I am a 'party,' and so in I go.

There are several people moving about and looking at the statues, or with bent backs and upturned faces gazing up at the roof. I join one of these groups, and fall immediately into the popular position. What an enormous distance that roof is, and how bare and gaunt and unfurnished is the general aspect of the whole upper part of the building! Immediately under the very centre of the dome, let into the floor, is a metal plate which marks the exact spot where Nelson's remains repose in the crypt. Round the inside of the dome are paintings, in eight different compartments, representing events in the life of St. Paul. These were painted by Sir James Thornhill, whose daughter sturdy little William Hogarth married. They are not of 'much count,' as the Yankees say; but they have been recently cleaned and restored, and are at least intelligible, which I hear they were not a few years ago. I notice, too, that some of the windows of the dome have been improved,

and the little narrow panes removed and replaced with broader sheets. But the neck soon gets tired of the position necessary to inspect the dome from the nave, and I walk leisurely round glancing at the statues. On either side the door I mark a Napier; soldier William, 'the historian of the Punjaub,' to the right; soldier Charles, the conqueror of Scinde, on the left: both eagle-beaked, long-headed, large-souled fellows. Here is ponderous old Samuel Johnson, by Bacon, R.A., 'in a Roman shape,' a style of costume which would very much have disconcerted the eminent lexicographer, had he actually been compelled to wear it, stern, heavy, and massive, with argumentative forefinger pointing to a scroll, which may be the 'copy' of the Dictionary, or 'London,' or the 'Lives of the Poets.' Here is that great genius and kindly man Joshua Reynolds, sculptured by Flaxman, to whom both the foregoing epithets may be applied. But oh, Mr. Flaxman! what were you thinking about when you modelled that tremendous British lion as an adjunct to your memorial of Lord Nelson? The quiet simple little man with the plain earnest face and the straight cut hair is there as we all imagine him, but some of his surroundings are absurd, and the British lion is terrific.

I have heard so much of the impertinence of the vergers that I am rather astonished at not being able to find any one who can tell me where I shall commence to make my ascent; and it is not until I have wandered round the monuments before described, that I come upon a mouldy old man who announces himself as the custodian of the stairs, and having heard that I want to penetrate to the 'topmost top,' demands 3s. 10d. as fees. Of this nearly half (1s. 6d.) is the charge for ascending into the ball, a service of some difficulty, which the wisdom of the Dean and Chapter discourages by imposing on the aspirant a high fee. As, however, like the rash young gentleman immortalized by Professor Longfellow, who scorned alike the seductions of beauty and

the hospitable invitations of the inhabitants of the Alpine valley, my motto happens to be 'Excelsior,' I determine to undergo this Silver Fleece, and pay my money without a murmur. In return for my coin I receive three tickets, and start on my ascent. Easy-going this! the steps are broad and flat, and lying close together; and as I go round and round at one never-varying pace, I am, to my own self-humiliation, reminded of a donkey I once saw at Carisbrooke Castle, who lifts water by perpetually walking round in the interior of a hollow wheel, never making any progress, but apparently sufficiently enjoying himself. Unlike my fellow-donkey, I do, however, make progress, and after a very short and unfatiguing rise, I find myself met by a surly gentleman, who holds his lunch in one hand, and with the other beckons me to follow him. Through a stone room, something like a guard-room in an old castle, we go, and turn sharp to the left into the Library, where I am about to address my guide, when he bursts into the conventional nasal sing-song, favourite tone of every Cicerone. 'The Libery,' says he, 'built by Sir Christopher Wren' (curious and hitherto unknown fact!) 'containin' so many 'underd books; in that hoke case is copies of the Bible in so many langwidges—the portrick over there is (somebody) founder of the Libery. The carved hoke is the work of Grinling Gibbings—take a book containin' an account of the kithednal!' I decline to purchase a book, thinking that I have spent enough in my 3s. 10d.; whereupon the sulky man becomes sulkier than ever, and, suddenly aware of the unfinished fragments of his lunch—it was ham sandwich, in which his teeth had worked great bays and Greek tower patterns,—declines to take further notice of me beyond pointing me to the right, and showing me the entrance to a very dark and narrow flight of steps. Very dark and very narrow, but up I go, groping my way with my hands outstretched before me, and feeling as if I were ascending a Brobdignagian corkscrew. Here

and there I get a glimmer of dull light from some semi-opaque window, and at last I arrive in what I see by a label is the Clock Room. Cranks, and wheels, and pulleys; and before me the heart of London, beating away the fleeting minutes of London's life. The operator is at work, winding it up with an enormous winch. It is wound up every day, he tells me, as I stand gazing at it and endeavouring to get up a proper feeling of solemnity, but I fail, and so shorten my stay. Higher up in darkness and groping, until I am received into the Whispering Gallery by a very courteous old gentleman. The Whispering Gallery is in the interior just at the base of the dome. From it you get the best sight of Thornhill's pictures, and a capital view of the body of the church. The old gentleman bids me go round and seat myself on 'the matting yonder,' when he will whisper to me. I obey, and am scarcely seated, when he startles me by a loud cough (unintentional on his part) a cough which tickles my ear and thrills through my being, and sends me off into convulsions of suppressed laughter. I hope the old gentleman does not see me, but when he recovers his coughing fit he begins to whisper. What he says I cannot for the life of me make out, but I nod, and say 'Capital;' and when I go round, I thank him for the treat he has given me, and he pauses in the middle of—oh—such a yawn!—to say I am welcome. Poor old gentleman! to spend so many weary hours daily at such a height above his fellow-creatures, and have to whisper soft nothings to the few he does see, cannot on the whole be a very enlivening task.

Upward again, through much the same kind of staircase until I reach the Stone Gallery which runs outside the base of the dome, and here I pause and take a cursory survey of the panorama around me. Cursory only though, for I am bound to greater heights, and pursuing my way I at last come upon a stout man, who asks me for my ticket for the Ball, and on being furnished with it, precedes me up a worse flight of steps. Bad it is, indeed, until we come

to the entrance to the Golden Gallery, which he will not let me enter as yet, but which he says I shall enjoy on my return. He then proceeds to doff his coat, and yields to me the foremost place, following closely at my heels. Now are we in almost pitch darkness, the way narrow, and at length he points out to me a straight, perpendicular ladder, which I ascend, setting my back against the opposite side, and climbing with difficulty. At the top of this I find a kind of iron cage, into which he suggests my insinuating myself. I object, pointing out that my figure has lost its early slimness, and that I doubt the possibility of my getting through the bars. He meets this objection with an axiom—'Where your 'ed can go, your body can follow; try your 'ed.' I am unprepared with a denial to this, and I do 'try my 'ed,' which passes through; presently I insinuate my body, and then he bids me climb up the rungs of this iron cage. With a painful recollection of the bears at the Zoological Gardens, I follow his instructions, and step by step ascend until I find myself standing upright in the Ball of St. Paul's. And then ensues between me and my companion beneath me, a conversation which insensibly reminds me of the dialogue between Punch and his showman. 'Are you up, sir?' asks the man. 'I am,' I reply. 'How do you feel yourself, sir?' 'Quite well, thank you.' 'Are you pretty comfortable, sir?' 'Yes, thank you.' 'You can say you've stood in the Ball of St. Paul's.' 'Yes, thank you; I'll come down, now.' And down I come preceded by the man, whom I find at the door of the Golden Gallery, brushing my hat with an earnestness which nothing less than a shilling could compensate.

In the Golden Gallery at last, and my task accomplished! but what about the panorama and the splendid view? When I left home the morning was magnificent, now far above my head is ethereal blue, 'blue unclouded weather,' such as that in which Sir Launcelot rode by the Lady of Shalott's windows! but over London hangs a thick canopy

of smoke, blowing from the south, and very much limiting the view. Now for the first time do I note how marvellously *vraisemblant* was Mr. Parrie's panorama of this view which used to be exhibited at the Colosseum; and now do I mark how the enormous image of warehouses on the south side of the churchyard, newly-built gigantic mansions, are hollow mockeries and shams, being all face, and only one room thick. Looking towards the south-east, the river seems but a narrow stream, and the bridges of Southwark and London are dwarfed and pigmied. I just catch a glimpse of the old Tower, 'London's lasting shame,' in the distance, and mark the top of the masts of the shipping in the pool. Finely stands out the spire of Bow Church, and beyond it I see the Exchange, but the Bank is not visible. That 'tall bully,' the Monument, can be discovered, and scores and scores of City churches, now probably congregationless. Immediately below me I see the General Post Office, well-proportioned and handsome, and behind

it the tasty little Goldsmiths' Hall; and moving more round to the north, I come upon Christ's Hospital, so beautiful in its architecture, and looking so much larger than it appears from the street. North-west the view is nothing. I see Ludgate Hill stretching like a thread beneath me, and can trace the half of Fleet Street, but then all is lost. I see a confused mass of steeples and high buildings of all shapes, and looking round towards the south-west I can just catch the outline of the Houses of Parliament, and distinguish the Victoria Tower. As to any distant view, there is not the remotest chance of it, for the smoke is master of the day, and my first pilgrimage in Picturesque London is utterly baffled by it. Nevertheless, I have not been unrewarded; I have had fine exercise, and explored the great Cathedral, and, as the man remarked, can say that I've stood in the Ball of St. Paul's. But in my next journey I will take care that smoke shall not spoil my pleasure, or I will contrive some means *ex fumo dare lucem*.

Q.



ALBERT THE GOOD.

'These to his memory.'

(With an Illustration by E. H. Corbould.)

STEADFAST, deep-hearted;—nay, not proud,

But set at odds with ill :
One whose great soul could speak aloud :Yet of a voice most still :
Who through a silence deep as tears,With courage from above,
Won to the hearts of all his peers,
And made a league with love.

The Christian knight with patient cheek,

Who broke the sword of wrong ;
Who took the burthen from the weak,And laid it on the strong :
Who gave to truth and tenderness

His guidance through the land ;

Yet bore a mighty heart no less
While clasping of a hand.

Nor king, nor subject—ave to God ;

A noble herald he,
Whose word was sacred as the sod ;Whereon he bent the knee :
The standard from whose hand might fallThat for a Queen he bore ;
But not till death had claimed him all,

And he could rise no more.

So passed he, even as heroes pass,

Who ride without a stain
Through crystal streams, whose waters glass
Fair deeds that live again ;

Who stem the tide of passion's sea,

And spurn the shoal of pain,

And lift the banner of the free,

With hand upon the rein.

So, forth he fared, nor swerved aside ;

Resolved, with lifted eye,

Still to strive on whate'er betide,

And let sweet life go by ;

So, forward pressed with zeal unworn,

Heedless of armour riven,

With 'Duty' for his watchword, borne

On the wing'd winds of heaven.

Far-looking to the conquering day,

He took no pause of breath ;

Nor e'er cried 'Halt' upon the way,

But strongly rode to death :

A name dropped from the battle-roll,

It was not his to reck,

Who by the beauty of a soul

Could hold the world in check.

Then, let us deem him living ; gone,

As from a well-fought field,

To some more blest Avillion

Where all his wounds are healed :

As one who, toiling near a throne,

Chose still the patriot's part,

And won a kingdom of his own

Deep in the nation's heart.

ELEANORA L. HERVEY.



Drawn by E. H. Colburn.

THE ARTIST IN THE LONDON PARK.

IN BOSTON HOW TRICKY TRICKS ARE.



Drawn by E. H. Cumbold.

THE ARTIST IN THE LONDON PARKS.

IN ROTTERDAM NOW THREE YEARS AGO.

Engraved by J. H. Cumbold.

THE SCHOOL OF MUSKETRY AT FLEETWOOD.

'Now all the youth of England are on fire,
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies;
Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.'

SHAKESPEARE.—*King Henry V.*

ONE fine morning we received a letter from a young friend inviting us to go north and visit him at the School of Musketry, Fleetwood, where he was at the time quartered—an aspirant to qualification as a musketry instructor.

His letter was headed with a novel crest and scroll or inscription. It represented a rifle held in position, topped with the words 'Celer et certus.' The novelty of the crest pleased the fancy and excited an interest in the visit, which decided our acceptance of the invitation.

In times of old, when it was emphatically declared that 'the might of England stood upon archers,' many of the high and noble families of Great Britain had the symbols of archery charged on their escutcheons; and the Government itself adopted the 'Broad Arrow Head' as the brand to identify public property—a mark which is still retained for that purpose, although the arrow has long ceased to be the emblem of England's 'right and might.'

The device to which we have alluded seemed to be an attempt to rectify this anachronism of the arrow as an emblem at the present day. Indeed it seemed to embody the very spirit of the times we live in, whilst it was peculiarly appropriate as an armorial bearing for the establishment from which it emanated. There it was—the far-famed rifle, the victor at Inkermann, the terror of the Sepoy—now grasped by the strong arm of the Volunteer—a most appropriate emblem of the 'National Movement,' whilst the paramount requirements of a modern fire-arm are fully declared by the motto—'Celer et certus'—celerity combined with accuracy being the great desiderata in a military weapon in our days, just as they were in the times of our worthy forefathers, five hundred years ago, when the long-bow was at its zenith, figuring

triumphantly at Crescy, Poitiers, and Agincourt; and when, according to good authority, twelve arrows could be shot with accuracy in a minute, at the distance of some six hundred yards.

So much for our young friend's military device and motto. In due time I found myself on the journey northwards, anticipating no little enjoyment from my visit to one of our laborious and ever-active Schools of Musketry. The tedium of a railway journey is everywhere the same—dividing itself, like certain modern epics and romances, into the beginning, the middle, and the end—the last being by far the most interesting part of the performance. On the present occasion, and in due time, my solitary reflections were interrupted by the guard demanding my ticket. On asking him how far it was to Fleetwood, I received the laconic reply, 'Next station, sir;' and bang went the door, and on rushed the iron horse—'on, ever on' through fields of rich pasture-land, prolific in game,—till the green and waving meadows melted away and merged into a lagoon-like swamp, which soon changed to acres of mud on both sides of the rails. Then something like an island came in view, approached by a dilapidated viaduct full of gaps—then a church, warehouses, a square-rigged ship, a steamer, a diminutive forest of masts belonging to sundry small craft in a variety of situations, with a larger forest of pine logs 'taking their rest' on the mud-bank, after their tempestuous transatlantic passage—and behold Fleetwood as first seen by the traveller from his railway carriage-windows.

Fleetwood is situated at the extremity of a spit of land in the north-west of Lancashire, at a point where the river Wyre effects its confluence with the Irish Sea.

On this same spot, only twenty

years ago, all nature ran wild and civilization was not. It was to England almost what Britain was to the ancient Romans—an *ultima Thule*—‘separated from all the world’—*toto orbe divisa*, if we may adapt the quotation.

The burrowing rabbit, the melancholy curlew, and the rapid plover were its only denizens—‘monarchs of all they surveyed.’ But about that period the enterprising spirit and Aladdin-like genius of one Sir Hesketh Fleetwood suddenly caused a well-built town to spring into existence there, together with a harbour, warehouses, landing-stages, a spacious and magnificent hotel—in short, all the essential accessories of a commercial port were there, save one, and that the most important—namely, *commerce*. You may take the horse to the well, but you can’t make him drink; and all the great commercial ports in the world have owed their rise and prosperity to that progressive development which time, events, and circumstances for the most part fortuitous, at all events unpremeditated, can alone secure. Thus arose Venice, Bristol, London, Liverpool, and New York. In spite of all the elaborate calculations of this sanguine enthusiast, cotton would not come to Fleetwood; and so this would-be Liverpool stopped short in its sudden growth; and after sundry spasmodic efforts to maintain its quasi-seaport character, it gradually subsided into a sort of overgrown fishing village.

‘Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.’

There are those who believe that there is an unknown destiny in all the works of man. At all events, ‘There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will.’ And Sir Hesketh turned out to be building ‘On her Majesty’s service.’

Fleetwood was not long destined to remain in this lethargic state of inaction, alike ‘to fortune and to fame unknown.’ For in consequence of the great development of the Volunteer movement, and the universal adoption of the rifle in our army, it became necessary that another School of Musketry should be organized in addition to that

already existing at Hythe; and so it came to pass that Fleetwood awoke one morning to find itself famous as the seat of the establishment which forms the subject of this paper, and which imparts to the place an interest not intrinsically its own, for Fleetwood is now the School of Musketry, and the School of Musketry is Fleetwood.

The extensive premises formerly known as the North Euston Hotel, before alluded to as one of Sir Hesketh’s grand erections, of prospective importance, were purchased by Government for 20,000*l.*; and they may be considered ‘cheap at the money’ since their original cost closely approximated 80,000*l.*

The main building has been set aside as quarters for the officers, and as such they are unsurpassed by any in the kingdom, perhaps owing to the simple, though apparently paradoxical reason that they were never intended for their present use and purpose. In England, everything designed for the use of the military is sure to be, first, unwholesome; secondly, most inconvenient; and thirdly, as a matter of course, most costly to the national exchequer.

The building has a semicircular frontage of about 300 feet. Its convex side faces the sea and river, and commands a glorious view of the river with its ever-changing shipping; Morecambe Bay, with its wide expanse of land and quicksand; and the lake district of Cumberland and Westmoreland beyond.

This *quondam* hotel affords accommodation for sixty officers, for whom an excellent mess is always provided in what formerly constituted the hotel coffee-room. Apropos of this transition from its original destination, an amusing incident is related—an instance of our modern Rip-van-Winkle-ism. A swarthy stranger, ‘bearded like a pard,’ walked into the mess-room, rang the bell, took up a newspaper, and threw himself into an easy-chair with all the nonchalance of ‘the world’s tired denizen.’ Supposing him to be an officer’s guest, or an Indian military hero, the mess-waiters promptly complied with his

orders, and he was soon seated at a smoking beefsteak, with oysters and all the other concomitants usually required by an Englishman fresh from foreign climes. Anon, however, the officers of the establishment began to drop in from the musketry practice-ground, where they had been actively engaged in ball-practice; and the stranger's ears were regaled with wondrous stories of unnumbered rounds of ball ammunition expended, 'and how one wing had beaten the other hollow in their volley-firing,' although it was admitted that the other had made more 'hits' in 'skirmishing,' while both sides agreed that the 'file-firing had been marvellously accurate,' *et hoc genus omne*. The man's appetite began to fail him during this terrible recapitulation. Dropping his knife and fork, he slowly rubbed his eyes, and asked himself if it was not all a dream, or had England been really invaded by the Yankees—as so often promised—during his absence, and a devastating war been raging on its soil! Explanations of course ensued, and this pilgrim who had returned from some 'sleepy hollow' in 'the under world,' bowed himself out of his *ci-devant* hostelry with the best 'grace' he could muster, after having partaken of a hearty meal at the expense of her Majesty's School of Musketry.

Leaving the mess-room, a long corridor brings us to a large handsome room, 72 by 33 feet, with a lofty modern Italian ceiling, supported by Corinthian columns. This was the ball-room in 'the light of other days.' The scene is changed now, and it serves as the lecture-room of the School of Musketry, better known to those who have gone through a course of musketry training by the nickname of the Agony, or Rack-room—a title earned from the fact of its being the scene of all the crucial examinations through which a musketry candidate must pass before receiving a certificate of qualification as an instructor in the science of rifle shooting. Here is the ominous black board, before which so many unfortunates have stood in confounded dismay at the dis-

covery of their incompetence to 'lecture'—their faces each 'a tablet of unutterable thoughts.'

Here are strange and curious models with which the neophyte is supposed to illustrate his subject. Here are glass cases containing every possible form, material, and principle of projectile which the human mind has devised or invented, from the days of Robins to Whitworth. Here a Blakely cannon-shot, brought from Fort Sumter, into the solid rivetment of which it is said to have penetrated three feet, and not looking much the worse for the hard butting—like the negro's skull after experimenting in like manner on a stone cheese by mistake.

The walls are fitted with racks, in which are arranged specimens of the fire-arms of all nations, and of all times, almost from the first 'Satanic' specimen, described by the poet Milton—'hollow engines, long and round,' used in the war of heaven, at all events from the first rude 'hande gunne' of the fifteenth century to the all but perfect 'Westley Richards' breech-loader of the present day.

The walls are further decorated with quaint and curious cartoons of the valiant musketeers and stalwart arquebuseers of the Old Mortality.

Amongst other luxuries of the establishment—if we can include the agony room in this category—there is one unheard of heretofore in the annals of barrack life; there are here two large salt-water swimming baths, for the special use of the officers and soldiers. Fleetwood must therefore be considered a sanatorium of the army, where the men at least are tempted to acquire cleanliness, which is said to be a substitute for godliness, and unquestionably very much needed in the army as a promoter of health, of which personal cleanliness is the first rule. A clean shave and cropped hair are all that we insist on, and consequently a march or a drill of the soldiers does not impregnate the air with the 'spice of Araby,' or the refreshing emanations of Piesse and Lubin, of Bond Street.

Apropos of these baths of Fleetwood, perhaps the time will come when in imitation of the French, as in almost all our military improvements, swimming will be taught to the men as a part of their drill and military training. The French teach all the necessary movements before the men go into the water; and in the water they are practised in performing all the feats required in actual warfare, carrying their arms and accoutrements in a variety of ways according to the supposed circumstances of a campaign. It is impossible to overrate the importance of this aquatic training in the French army. If all the men be not thus trained, for the benefit at least of their health, at least we might have a certain number of men in every battalion thus rendered amphibious for the well-known contingencies of a campaign. Instances have occurred where swimming soldiers have crossed a river to surprise a hostile position, and facilitate a disembarkation.

In order still further to propitiate the goddess Hygiene, an Artesian well is being sunk in the adjoining barrack square, with the view of procuring an abundant supply of that most necessary element—pure water—the water at present obtainable having a slightly brackish savour, owing to the proximity of the sea. The contractor has engaged to sink a shaft 600 feet deep, and deeper still—in fact, even to China, as the Yankees say, should the skulking element elude him at that profundity. The boring has already advanced to a depth over 500 feet, without any signs, however, of either rock or its usual concomitant, water; so that this Fleetwood well may yet rival in depth the far-famed Artesian well at Passy, and make a respectable 'figure' in the earth's radius.

Such are the salient points in the material arrangement of this establishment.

The special object of the School of Musketry is to train officers and non-commissioned officers for the post of musketry instructors in their several corps and battalions. For this purpose, therefore, are officers

and detachments from different regiments sent, from time to time, to be exercised throughout a systematic course of rifle instruction, theoretical and practical.

On a future occasion we hope to be able to impart to our readers some idea of what is done in this respect, together with some details regarding the soldiers' barracks recently erected, and the superb ranges for shooting. In the meantime we cannot do better than give, in conclusion, the substance of a General Order, recently issued by the Horse Guards, for the information and guidance of applicants for admission to a course of instruction at either School of Musketry—Hythe or Fleetwood.

Classes for musketry instruction are formed at the Schools of Musketry, at the under-mentioned dates:—

- 1st Term—3rd January.—*Special Class for 40 adjutants and 100 sergeants, one-half of whom will be drawn from Militia and Volunteers.*
- 2nd Term—9th February.—Regular course for 60 officers and 280 men, including 5 officers and 40 sergeants of Militia and Volunteers.
- 3rd Term—14th April.—Regular course as above, 5 places being reserved for officers of Militia and Volunteers.
- 4th Term—17th June.—Short course for a class of 100 Volunteers.
- 5th Term—21st July.—Same as third.
- 6th Term—20th September.—Same as fourth.

The adjutant of a Volunteer corps, or an administrative regiment, when duly qualified by the possession of a certificate from a school of musketry, is to be considered the regular instructor of musketry of the corps or administrative regiment, but it is competent for a commanding officer to employ as additional instructors any officers or non-commissioned officers of the corps or regiment who may be properly qualified for the duty.



Drawn by M. J. Lawton.

NOT FOR YOU.

See the Poem.

NOT FOR YOU

YOU tell me I am not a saint
 When you would say I am
 To tempt me not to try to be
 Thus are you lying to me

"I love you!" you would say to me
 And then you would say no
 You have interpreted wrong
 The feelings of a friend

Love should be there just for me
 And not for you to say
 A judge that I am not a saint
 There is no such thing as a saint

And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint

And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint

You would say to me that you are
 Not a saint, but you are
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint

You would say to me that you are
 Not a saint, but you are
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint

You would say to me that you are
 Not a saint, but you are
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint

You would say to me that you are
 Not a saint, but you are
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint

You would say to me that you are
 Not a saint, but you are
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint

You would say to me that you are
 Not a saint, but you are
 And yet you would say to me
 That you are not a saint



W. J. L.

W. J. L.

W. J. L.

NOT FOR YOU.

YOU tell me I must hear you speak :
 What you would say I know ;
 It brought the rose to this pale cheek,
 From *his* lips long ago !

'I love you !' you would tell me this :
 Must then our converse end ?
 You have interpreted amiss
 The feelings of a friend.

Love once on these poor lips of mine
 Has set his sacred seal,—
 A pledge that I will ne'er resign,
 Though vainly pledged, I feel !

Against my father's wish I loved,
 Against my mother's will ;
 False, as they prophesied, he proved,
 And yet—I love him still !

And so I was alone—alone !
 For years I had not heard
 One accent fond, one gentle tone,
 One cheering kindly word.

You came ! your noble nature brought,
 An all unhopèd-for balm
 Of sympathy, and pitying thought,
 And counsels wise and calm.

But, ah ! too well I saw, at length—
 I felt—'twould end in this,
 And yet my poor heart lacked the strength
 To turn from that brief bliss.

I smiled—the smile was not for you ;
 I sighed—not yours the sigh ;
 One love for me, my whole life through,
 Sufficeth till I die.

Yet o'er the bitter—bitter past,
 You flung a garland sweet ;
 I prized it though it might not last,—
 Forgive the poor deceit.

Forgive me for the selfish fears,
 That kept me mute so long ;
 Let me wash out with these hot tears,
 The memory of the wrong.

But all your hope to win my love,
 For ever, friend, resign ;
 Onward for aye apart we move,
 You your way, and I mine !

MISS MORTON'S MINCE PIES.

I.

AT five minutes to eight precisely, on the morning of December the 21st, 184-, a dark-haired damsel entered a room whose furniture indicated rather a lawyer's or an architect's office than the boudoir of a wealthy young woman who had just completed her twenty-fourth year. The room, too, was small, when compared with the size of the mansion. It was one of those snug nooks into which the owners of great houses love to escape, as a refuge from the solitary vastness of their state apartments.

She looked round the room, and gave half a sigh—not a sigh of sorrow, but of patient weariness. Everything was singularly utilitarian to belong to an elegant unmarried woman. There were book-cases containing gazetteers, dictionaries, and acts of parliament, but not a single smart-bound entertaining work; not one novel, poem, or book of prints.

The only ornaments which tempered the business-like severity of the place were, in the middle of the large table, an old china jar with a bouquet of laurustinas and monthly roses, and at the window which faced the south, a small antique carved oak bench, which was occupied by a cage containing a pair of siskins, and flanked on each side by a large camellia, one covered with pure white, the other with bright crimson blossoms. As daylight brightened the little tenants of the cage woke up. The male bird began his soft and ready song, always cheerful and never noisy. The hen peeped through the wires of her cage, calling to her mistress to notice her as plainly as the voice of bird could speak.

'Ah, yes! I know what *you* want,' said the lady, rising, and taking a cluster of the fruit of the elder-tree from a little box that stood on the bench. 'I wish everybody's wants were as easily supplied.'

An old servant, not in livery, with white, not powdered, hair, slowly opened the door. 'Good morning,

Miss Morton,' he said, with a bow. 'If you please, ma'am, Mr. Saunders is here.'

Be it recorded that our heroine expected her personal attendants to wish her good morning every day, which salutation she punctually returned.

'Good morning, Robert,' replied the lady, cordially.

'Come in, dear sir,' she continued, addressing the person outside. 'Good morning to you, and a good stock of courage. The shortest day will be hardly long enough for what we have to do.'

'A good morning to you, madam, and best wishes also. The wedding, I presume, still remains fixed for the twenty-fourth?'

'Of course, dear sir. It has been so arranged, and there is no reason for changing it. It seems sudden, though, as the day draws nigh. On Christmas Eve—I can hardly believe it—I take unto myself a lord and master.'

'A good lord, madam, who makes you Lady Farlington, with a countess's coronet in certain prospect. Not a master, madam—which you do not want—but a husband and a friend—of which you do really stand in need.'

'It is true, dear sir,' replied the lady, gravely; 'although I have found true and good friends in yourself and that worthy woman Curtis.'

'We are only faithful servants, madam; we are confidential attendants, Miss Morton; we simply form part of your suite. We are too old, as well as too far below you in birth and wealth to aspire to more. You will soon enjoy equal companionship.'

The lady was about to make some reply, when the clock in the central turret struck eight, with slow and deliberate strokes, as if exemplifying its own motto—'FESTINA LENTE.' At the third stroke the door again opened to admit an upright elderly lady dressed in russet silk, with a pale and wrinkled countenance animated by clear grey eyes. A pro-

fusion of flaxen hair, which set up a stout resistance to turning grey, was surmounted by a cap pretentious through the quality of its lace, and 'picturesque and dressy by its ample lappets. She had once been very handsome; and the comforting persuasion that she was handsome still—for her time of life—shed a placid complacency over her countenance. This matronly person was followed by old Robert bearing a well-filled tray, whose contents he arranged on the small table and the dumb waiter, and then retired.

'Good morning, Curtis,' said the younger lady to her *dame de compagnie*, affectionately kissing her on either cheek, as if she had been her aunt or her mother. 'Quite well? Punctual as usual with breakfast on business days. Do you join us, dear sir?'

'I thank you much, madam; but I have already breakfasted.'

'With your habitual economy of time, dear sir.'

Of the three persons here closeted together, the youngest, Angelica Farleigh Morton, was one of those heiresses in whose personality several fortunes naturally converge, exactly as mountain streams, which find no other outlet, contribute to form a lake. She was an only child; her parents, Walter and Angelica Farleigh, had followed each other rapidly to the grave when she was but ten years old. From them she inherited the Madderley Park estate, together with all the rest of their substance. A great uncle and two maiden aunts on her mother's side bequeathed, the former, landed property in Scotland, the latter wide estates in Wales, requesting her to add to her paternal patronymic their family name of Morton. These possessions, well nursed during a long minority, produced a revenue befitting a peerage, and attracted many an aspirant to the hand of their owner. Poor Angelica would have been puzzled to choose, if only from the number of suitors to choose from. But she had heard so much of the misfortunes and miseries of heiresses who had married scamps, that at one time, in despair, she had serious thoughts of escaping that

danger by taking sorrowful refuge in maidenhood for life. She had no near relations to whose advice she could listen; distant cousins might only confirm her resolution, as ultimately tending to their own advantage. Mr. Saunders, however, succeeded in convincing her that the heir to an earldom, six years older than herself, an active member of parliament, and holding an under-secretaryship in the ministry, with a handsome person and gentlemanly tastes, really presented a suitable match and reasonable prospects of happiness. After three months' hesitation Lord Farlington's offer had been formally accepted.

The confidential adviser, whose counsel had turned the scale between matrimony and old-maidenhood, had managed the Madderley Park estate before Angelica was born. With her earliest recollections were associated his periodical audiences in her father's study; he was tall and ruddy then; as tall and ruddy, though slightly stooping, now. Upwards of sixty, he was yet hale and vigorous, owing, he said, to his carrying out the maxim, 'Early to bed, and early to rise,' with other favourable circumstances, doubtless, combined. He had received Angelica from her parents almost as a sacred charge, and he regarded the furtherance of her interests as nearly a parental duty. His intercourse with her was marked by great respect. From the moment of her becoming the representative of so much wealth, he mostly addressed the girl as 'Madam.' Nor was his outward respect a piece of acting. He found in her a rectitude of mind, a decision of character, and a love of justice which it delighted him to recognize in the daughter of the house he had served so long. On her part there could only be reverence and attachment for so old and so faithful a friend. She very rarely addressed him by name, but conferred upon him the official title of 'Dear sir,' occasionally expanded into 'My dear sir.'

The lady whom Angelica addressed as 'Curtis,' had been her governess at the time of her parents' death; and, with her guardians'

consent, when the call for tuition ceased, had continued with her ever since as chaperon, companion, and friend. During an illness, through which she had nursed the child, 'Miss' Curtis had been abbreviated into Curtis, simply to save weak breath. The abbreviation survived the weakness, but only in private intercourse. Before visitors and the world in general, Miss Curtis always received the spinsterly title to which she had a right as a power in the establishment. Besides her young charge, Angelica, Miss Curtis had no friends or relations she much cared for, or who she believed cared much for her. A long residence in an aristocratic mansion gradually estranges its inmates from their old acquaintances without. She had once had a lover, a promising young clergyman, and had even engaged to marry him; but the doctors sent him to Italy, for a chest complaint, and he died on his way thither at Thun, in Switzerland. Years afterwards, while on a tour in that country with her pupil, they went unaccountably out of their way, and visited Thun, although not in their itinerary. While Angelica was admiring the famous view from the cemetery, gazing at the white Blumlis Alp and the dark-green Niesen, poor Miss Curtis, regardless of their glories, was shedding bitter tears over a modest grave.

'As you do not partake of our meal,' Miss Morton said, 'perhaps, dear sir, while Curtis and I are despatching our tea and toast, you will have the goodness to run your eye through that pile of letters, and give me your opinion about them. Only twenty-seven begging letters in the course of one week! Applications—appeals to my generosity, they call them; sometimes even, debts due by the rich to the poor, loans to the Lord, and so forth. But in all cases, I am expected to give; which I would do willingly, as far as my means go, supposing the object to be worthy. You, dear sir, have taught me to say "No," when the object appears to be unworthy; and a very useful little word it is. We fill a hard position, do we heiresses. We wish to do good; and we dare

not stir a step, for fear of committing blunders. We are afraid to marry, afraid to give, afraid to make new or intimate acquaintances. We are a booty to be scrambled for. Every man's hand is raised against us; and what stranger we can trust, we know not. You must recognise the handwriting of several of them?'

'Perfectly, madam. This; and this, for instance.'

'I have double-crossed those which require no further notice. Please to cause inquiry to be made into them which are crossed only once. On the others, I have marked the sums I think we might give.'

'Amongst these applications for assistance,' the old steward observed, 'I expected to have seen, and wish I had seen, one from your neighbours, the Trinnell family. Their seven acres of land have always been mortgaged, as long as I can remember anything. The father's long illness and death, the son's accident with his broken collarbone, the failure of their potato crop by this new and mysterious disease, and other misfortunes, which never come single, must have reduced them greatly. They have lately involved their little property still more deeply, and have fallen, I suspect, into very bad hands. Henry Trinnell, you remember, madam, voted against you at the last election. It was not his will. He was forced to it by the party who will come down upon him with a crash before very long.'

'Poor fellow! We must try and help him.'

'The only way to help him, Miss Farleigh Morton, is to get possession of his land, and let him remain on it as your tenant. Besides, ever since I have known Madderley, it has been as constant a tradition with the family that the Trinnell's Seven Acres ought to belong to the Hall Estate, as it is with Russia to take Constantinople. You own the whole parish, except his little patch. He and you are the sole parishioners who have rights on the common; that is, the common belongs to two persons only. When you have obtained his seven acres and his common rights, you will carry your belt of trees outside him, and will have

the whole parish within a ring-fence. If I see clearly, the thing may be done before a month is over.'

'The annexation of the Trimmell's Seven Acres, dear sir, is one of the few points about which we differ. I don't want their land. It is not contiguous to mine, but it is separated from it by a highway road. I am in a ring-fence already. I like the common as it is. You want to enclose and encircle it with a strip of stifling plantation, although we are overdone with trees. When I am tired of the park, and want air, I go up to the common, and can breathe freely. As to the family traditional policy, it is a mere lawyer's or land-agent's notion. It is unjust and grasping, and I do not adopt it.'

'You are your own mistress, Miss Farleigh Morton,' the steward replied with slight vexation. 'I only do my duty as your man of business, when I watch every circumstance likely to improve the estate. But you may quiet any scruples by being assured that Henry Trimmell must either come to you at last, or go to far worse grief.'

'I hope not, most sincerely.'

'Your hope, madam, will be disappointed. His fate is as certain as that of the lamb in the grasp of the wolf. He is turning over in his mind all sorts of desperate measures. He talks of going to Australia, with his younger brother and the wreck of his property: he won't go to Australia, because he won't leave his mother to die here alone. The Evil One has tempted him to marry the Widow Smithson, who has been making up to him for the last two years, and whose property would set him all right again. He won't marry the Widow Smithson; because he is too fond of Susan Blake, Susan Blake being equally fond of him. No doubt, he has seriously thought of enlisting, likewise of hanging and drowning; but he has good sense enough to see that neither soldiering nor self-destruction will greatly better his plight. Like other people at their wits' end, he looks earnestly for a loop-hole of escape, finds none, and stops where he is.'

Miss Morton merely observed,

'We shall see. I am very sorry for him indeed. To change the subject, were you able, dear sir, to complete the little affair I mentioned?'

'Certainly, madam. Here are the papers at your disposal.'

'Capital! Curtis, this concerns you. My change of position compels me to look to my expenses. You remain with us, you know, exactly on the old footing, but your stipend is to be reduced one half.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed the lady companion, in utter astonishment. 'Certainly, if need were, after so many happy years, I would willingly remain with you without any remuneration whatever. My little patrimony and my savings have made me what people call "independent"—as if any one in this world were independent of others! But may I inquire, Miss Morton, whether you intend carrying out the same reduction throughout your establishment? I fear they will not take it so quietly as I do.'

'I can't afford it, dear Curtis. Listen a moment! We are too busy to-day to waste our time in mystification. You have borne my caprices ever since I was a child, and you have never had more than the *recol.* a-year which was your salary as governess. But I cannot tell how you will agree with my husband; so I wish you to be at least "independent" of him and me. You are down for a trifle in my will, but I mean to keep you out of that as long as I can, even if my present will were not likely to be good for nothing a few days hence. From the first of January next, forward, you will therefore receive, from Mr. Saunders, no more than fifty pounds per annum; but here is an annuity for your life of *recol.* a-year, the first half-yearly payment of which will be due to you on the first of January next. There! Are you very cruelly treated? Don't say a word. Leave Mr. Saunders and myself to our work, and try and keep my bridesmaids down stairs in order. Their breakfast-bell will soon be ringing. When we have quite done, I will join you in the little drawing-room. So now good-bye, my good old friend.'

II.

The reader will hardly care to know the arrangements made, the documents [gone through, the projects discussed by the queen of the domain and her secretary of state. There was plenty of dust wiped off bundles of papers, plenty of red tape to tie and untie, plenty of signatures to affix, plenty of addition and subtraction to be done. The work went on [till after luncheon, of which a modest supply was brought up by Robert, and hastily shared by the parties in council. On returning to remove what was left of the repast, Robert announced the arrival of a messenger, a London jeweller in person, who had been despatched by Lord Farlington with a handsome casket, which he was to deliver to Miss Farleigh Morton's self.

'What is his name?'

'Mr. Poynter, ma'am, of the firm of Rumble and Poynter, — Street.'

'Curious! They are my own jewellers. Request him to do me the favour to join the ladies downstairs at luncheon. I will come the instant I am at liberty.'

Steady perseverance will level mountains. At last Mr. Saunders's portfolio was closed: the lady was free.

'Apropos of Lord Farlington,' she said, rising from her chair; 'he is to arrive on the afternoon of the twenty-third, he hopes not later than three o'clock, which will still be broad daylight. The arches of welcome, erected over the road at the boundary of the property and at the entrance of the park, were very pretty on paper, but look somewhat meagre when executed. I wish to have them filled out with a heavier garnishing of evergreens. Be so good, dear sir, as to see Henry Trimmell and his brother, and request them to carry out that intention. He has good taste in garden decoration, and will do it well. He will find plenty of materials in the pheasant coverts, and he may send in his bill immediately. Every little will be a help to enable him to meet his payments.'

The steward shook his head, as if to intimate that the matter was hopeless. 'He will be in town,' he said,

'disposing of his garden produce, until late in the afternoon, when I will make a point of seeing him.'

'Thank you. And now, dear sir, let us go and look at this new proof of my future husband's gallantry.'

On entering the little drawing-room they found an ebony casket lying in state in the centre of a circular table, and surrounded by the bridesmaids, marshalled by Miss Curtis, all anxious for a peep at the hidden treasures. The goldsmith, assisted by Robert, superintended the ceremonial. This goldsmith, singular to say, wore no jewellery, except a very simple watch-chain, and that not of the latest fashion. No rings bedecked his fingers, no pins or brooches blazed in his cravat. He did not carry half the stock of his shop upon his person. With a respectful bow, and a smile of recognition, he proceeded to business.

Producing a paper from his pocket-book, 'This,' he said, 'is the list of articles ordered by Lord Farlington. Miss Farleigh Morton will take possession of the key and have the kindness to verify. The way in which the casket opens is a very simple secret—thus.'

'Give me the list, to read aloud,' entreated Lady Jane Ogilvie, the youngest of the bridesmaids. 'Oyez, all of you.'

"Item; A diamond necklace, to match the earrings and brooch belonging to Miss Morton;

"Item; Two antique cameo bracelets, to match the cameo necklace belonging to Miss Morton, with brooch;

"Item; A complete set of coral ornaments, Greek pattern, set in gold;

"Item; An emerald and diamond guard-ring, with brooch and earrings of the same, to match."

'Not a single pearl!' exclaimed Eleanor M'Dougall, the eldest bridesmaid, a black-haired, blue-eyed daughter of the North.

'I beg your pardon, ladies,' Mr. Poynter politely interposed. 'On turning over the list you will find other items mentioned on the back.'

'Ah, yes!

"Item; Seven strings of fine pearls, to be arranged according to Miss Morton's wishes;

"Item; A green velvet purse embroidered with gold."

'The purse mentioned,' said Mr. Poynter, 'is contained in this secret drawer; but the list says nothing of its contents. On the front, you observe, Ladies, is embroidered £500; Lady Farlington's pocket-money. There are ten rouleaux of fifty sovereigns each. The purse opens with a key and closes with a spring. Miss Morton will have the complaisance to take the key and count the rouleaux. I must now point out a contrivance of Lord Farlington's own suggestion. You observe this little gold button; above it is a circular aperture in the velvet, showing a small enamelled plate marked with the figures £500. Lady Farlington is supposed to take one or more rouleaux at a time. By turning the button the figures are changed to £450, £300, and so on, showing the actual contents of the purse. But when the last rouleaux is taken, and the cypher £0 is displayed, a mechanical contrivance prevents the purse from closing. Its open mouth gives Lord Farlington a hint that the time is come to fill it again.'

'Delightful!' sighed Edith Manners, the second bridesmaid; 'but out of the Arabian Nights tales, bridegrooms like Lord Farlington are not often to be found.'

'There is still something more,' Mr. Poynter added, 'not on the list, if Miss Morton will condescend to examine the purse.'

'A letter! No. An unsealed envelope, directed "To our friend Miss Curtis." Satisfy our curiosity, dear Curtis, and tell us at once what it is.'

'A fifty-pound note! How generous and kind!'

'And that, I believe, is all,' said Mr. Poynter. 'My commission is executed, and your ladyship will now permit me to take my leave.'

'I am no ladyship yet,' said Miss Morton, smiling.

'It is exactly the same as if you were,' the goldsmith rejoined.

'Not quite exactly, Mr. Poynter,' interposed little Lady Jane. 'Even if there be no slip between the cup and the lip, it is better when the lip is on the cup than—'

She checked herself, blushing at

her own sally. Mr. Poynter, feeling he was stepping on tender ground, made his escape as promptly as possible. Mr. Saunders shortly followed his example.

III.

The guests at Madderley Hall, increased by arrivals during the afternoon, were assembled in the drawing-room. The few gentlemen present had returned from the dinner-table, and tea and coffee were going their round.

A large landed proprietor, at home, if he attends much to his own affairs, has not even his evenings to himself, but is obliged to hear reports, give audience, and decide on measures at hours which more lightly-burdened people devote entirely to relaxation. Miss Morton was not exempt from the penalties of her lot. She often had to leave a group of entertaining visitors to listen to what the doctor, the curate, or the village lawyer had to say. These consultations were always held in the uttermost corner of the drawing-room, to which Lady Jane consequently gave the name of the Cabinet Council Chamber. An unpractised eye would have seen nothing in it. A high-backed sofa, facing the wall, formed, with a few chairs, a small square nook, which imagination might easily convert into a sort of vestry, separated from the rest of the apartment. This sacred corner was rarely entered except by the lady of the house and those who wanted to speak to her in confidence. Seated on the sofa, with her back to the rest of the company, she there heard what people had to say, gave her reply, and then dismissed them.

As soon as Mr. Saunders had emptied his cup, a look from Miss Morton summoned him to the Council Corner. He there informed her that the arches of welcome were likely to prosper under Trimmell's superintendence: moreover, that the poor young man, after a hard struggle between his pride and his poverty, had made a clean breast of all his troubles, had confessed his debts and difficulties, had told how he became entangled in the usurious nets of a money-lending 'Party'; how his

mare and her colt, his cow, and the implements wherewith he gained his livelihood were threatened with seizure by the Party; that the Party's main object was to get the land, in order to sell it again to Miss Morton (who, the Party felt sure, was determined to have it) at an exorbitant price; that the sale of the land, to somebody, was now inevitable, and therefore that he (Trimnell) had rather Miss Morton took the land, with its incumbrances, at once, and so thwart the Party's avaricious schemes. To which he (the steward) had agreed, granting favourable conditions, with the promise of a long lease. 'In short, madam, within three months,' he concluded, 'seven acres will be incorporated with the Madderley estate. You may cut up the common into fields, and the surveyor may make a new map showing the enlarged boundary.'

'You have gone a little beyond your credentials; but never mind, it will all come to the same in the end. And so good night, dear sir; I thank you much in the matter of the arches.'

As he retired the four bridesmaids made their way into the lady's sanctuary.

'You here!' said Angelica, rising. 'You and I can talk just as well by the fire.'

'No indeed!' said Lady Jane. 'We are come on business. It must be kept a secret. Do give us just one minute.'

'We have a petition to present,' said Edith Manners, 'which if your Highness will deign to grant, your petitioners will ever pray.'

'The truth is, we want to have a little fun to-morrow,' said Eleanor M'Dougall, coaxingly. 'There will be no fun on Christmas Eve, nothing but form and good-behaviour.'

'And what sort of fun may it please you to have? My funny time is almost over.'

'That's the very reason for enjoying it now,' pleaded Cordelia Owen, the third bridesmaid. 'We want, they have told you, to have some fun, and for us girls there's no fun like cooking. Do let us, dear Angelica! Don't you remember how we used to make toffy in the school-

room, and burn our fingers and smear our pinafores? Don't you remember, when we met abroad, how we made an English pancake, and when you tried to toss it and catch it in the pan how it fell flat upon your head? Don't you remember, another time, Edith's incantation during the grand experiment of the bacon omelette?—

'Double, double, toll and trouble;
Fire burn, and fry-pan bubble!
Egg of sable Spanish hen,
Powder of fresh bruised cayenne,
Sweet herbs cul'd at full o' moon,
Shred and mix'd with silver spoon;
Pinch of salt, and—dark's the hour!—
Ounce of finest wheaten flour;
Butter sweet, and mince-meat fine
Cut from off the blacken'd chine,
Mingle, mingle as you can,
Ere transferring to the pan.
Double, double, toll and trouble;
Fire burn, and fry-pan bubble!'

'Do then, pray do let us have a little cooking, for the last time. How delightful it would be, for instance, to make a few mince-pies to-morrow!'

'I will peel and chop the apples,' said Miss M'Dougall.

'I will stone the plums,' said Lady Jane.

'I will mince the beef and the suet,' said Edith.

'I will make the pie-crust,' said Cordelia Owen.

'And I too will heat the oven,' said Lady Jane.

'And by what time do you think your pies will be ready? Certainly not before the end of the week. Your paste will be heavy before your mincemeat is made. I must arrange matters for you differently to that. Mincemeat, you *don't* seem to know, ought to be prepared a month beforehand, and well stirred up every day till used. As a lesson in early rising and punctuality, can you have finished your breakfasts by a quarter to nine to-morrow morning?'

'We can! we can!' cried the chorus of bridesmaids.

'Very well, then, we shall see. Miss Curtis and myself will breakfast alone at eight. Mr. Saunders will occupy me for a quarter of an hour, and then, young ladies, I am at your service. We will try our hands at a little confectionary.'

IV.

'Robert,' said Miss Morton, at her morning meal, 'tell Mrs. Davis to have the oven in the still-room heated, to make me a good quantity of piecrust, to place a large jar of mincemeat on the dresser, with patty-pans and everything needful to make pies. Ask her also to oblige me with the loan of six white aprons and six white caps, and to keep the servants out of the way. When all is ready let me know, and request my young friends to meet me in the still-room.'

To hear was to obey on Robert's part. Mrs. Davis, the housekeeper, less docile, grumbled — she was

jealous of invasion on her territory, and dreaded the extortion of her confectionary secrets—but she knew her mistress too well to refuse, even indirectly; she only obeyed with a very bad grace. 'If Miss Morton,' she muttered, 'thinks that I am going to give her lessons in pastry, she will find herself much mistaken.'

Robert, after fulfilling his mission, announced, 'The young ladies, ma'am, are waiting for you, but Mrs. Davis is very cross to-day.'

'Did you ever know a good cook, Robert, who was not very cross at times? Pay no attention to her, and she will soon recover her good humour. You will remain with us



while I amuse the girls. Carry also the casket there, if you please. I wish to look over its contents again.'

The conclave was assembled, the doors were closed, and they merrily proceeded with their task.

'In the first place, my dears,' said the lady of the house, 'we cannot enjoy cooking dressed as we are. While I put on this snowy apron and this neat white cap you and Miss Curtis will do the same. There! Are we not as charming as at a fancy ball, and at considerably less ex-

pense? You, Jane, will butter the patty-pans, to prevent the crust from sticking to them; you, Edith, will cut out the paste into rounds as fast as Mrs. Davis rolls it out; you, Eleanor, will put the bottom crust into the pans; and you, Cordelia, will undertake the responsibility of filling them with mincemeat. Miss Curtis and I will put on the top crust, make all secure, and finish off. Robert will do the baking part, and put in and take out our batches from the oven.'

The work commenced and progressed joyously, in spite of the housekeeper's sullen looks. 'How kind of you, Davis, to help us in this way!' said Angelica, opening the casket and displaying its sparkling contents. 'You shall see the present Lord Farlington has sent me. Look at this beautiful diamond necklace! look at these charming earrings and bracelets!'

'Very pretty, indeed, ma'am,' said the matron, relaxing; 'only they are of no earthly use. They're like heaps of money buried in the earth; they give you no interest; you can't help a friend with them. If you want to buy a poor man a coat or to lend him a sovereign, you can't take out one of the jewels to do it with. You mustn't touch them; they are yours, but not your own. You may look at them yourself, and let other people look at them; but looking never yet filled a hungry stomach.'

'True, Davis; but my lord has added something more serviceable for present use. Beside the jewels is a purse full of sovereigns, to gratify any little fancy I may have to-day. Suppose I begin by giving you and Robert a Christmas-box each? There! Put it in your pocket without more ado.'

'Thank you kindly, ma'am,' said the housekeeper, quite softened. 'I hope your heart will always be as light as my crust promises to be to-day.'

'And get on, all of you, as quick as you can; for your day's work will not be finished when I have put my last top crust on my last mince-pie. Those that are glazed and marked with a cross we will eat at home; the rest you shall distribute in the village. It will be a pleasant walk. Robert will accompany you and carry the basket; I cannot go myself, but must remain within doors. Well done, Robert; the last batch. Nicely browned, and not one burnt; Mrs. Davis herself could not have turned them out better.'

v.

The little party of pedestrians, as arranged, left the park by the gate

nearest to the foot of the lake, whose surplus water set a mill in motion. While looking over the mill bridge at the white stream of foam which rushed from beneath it, they met the miller's little son and daughter coming out with their maid for their afternoon ramble. Miss Curtis addressed a kind word to them; but the boy, instead of answering to the point, directed his attention to Robert's basket.

'How nice it smells!' said the child, with a roguish look. 'Better than plum-pudding. I should so like to know what it is.'

'Only mince-pies. You know what mince-pies are? The young ladies at the Hall have been making them; and we are now going to give them away to people who cannot make any themselves.'

'I should like to taste one,' pleaded the boy. 'Wouldn't you, Louisa?'

'Please, Miss Curtis, I should indeed,' lisped Louisa, smiling timidly at the official lady.

'You don't want them; you will have some at home. I am sure you will have mince-pies on Christmas Day.'

'Ah! but not so nice as those. Besides, miss, to-day is not Christmas Day.'

'Well, I think I may give you one very small one each. Mind, however, you are not to bite them, but to eat them with a knife and fork.'

The children ran into the house triumphant, each holding in its hand a warm mince-pie. Two minutes afterwards the miller's parlour-window was suddenly thrown open; the miller's wife put out her head, beaming with smiles; the boy waved his cap in the air, giving what he thought a tremendous huzza, while the little girl clapped her hands as if she thought their sound would be audible.

Miss Curtis smiled in token of intelligence, at the same time laying her finger on her lips, to intimate that a secret was to be kept. The miller's wife nodded in a way which said, 'You may do what you like, but it's quite impossible;' and the pie distributors went their way.

They reached the first triumphal

arch, which was awaiting Trimmell's finishing touch; he and his assistants being busy at the second. Close by, on either side of the road, was a group of cottages, at each of which they left one or more mince-pies. The cottagers were mightily puzzled—not at the attention, for they were accustomed to similar acts of kindness, but at the smallness of the gift. What were one, two, or three little bits of plums and pastry, to satisfy three or four sharp-set appetites?

The object of their mission required despatch. The ladies were nimble-footed enough; but poor old Robert, besides his load, was never intended to walk for a wager. Indeed, he was an indoor footman born. He had long arms, to carry a tray; a tolerably clear head, to remember orders; a long body to display ample waistcoats; but he had the shortest of legs. Consequently, to keep up with four brisk bridesmaids, he had to recur to a sort of amble which he had not practised since his boyhood. It was a great relief to his failing breath when the second arch rose in sight. There they found the band of decorators busy at their work of interweaving evergreens.

'How pretty!' said Miss Curtis to her young companions. 'This is a great improvement since yesterday. You have done wonders, Trimmell. But you look pale and tired.'

'Glad you approve, miss,' he replied, with a bow; 'and hope Miss Morton will approve of it likewise. Mr. Saunders has assisted me with his advice, and he promises to return in twenty minutes. I have worked hard at it, miss. To save time, I breakfasted before daylight, and have not yet been home to dinner.'

'Come with us, then, and take some refreshment; we are going straight to Seven Acres.'

The common was soon crossed, and Trimmell's residence reached. The heavy-hearted widow smiled, in spite of her sorrows, at the cheerful looks of her visitors.

'Miss Morton has sent you,' Miss Curtis announced, 'two bottles of good port wine. And here is a Christmas pie for you, James Trim-

nell, because you are a good lad. Mind, you are not to bite it, but to cut it with a knife. I am glad, Susan Blake, to see you here, giving the widow a helping hand. This pie is for you; and this for you, Mrs. Trimmell. Yours, Henry Trimmell, is a little larger. Taste it at once; it is better than it looks. So good-bye to you all; there will be plenty of time to finish the arches.'

'Cut it with a knife, indeed!' James exclaimed, as soon as the ladies were out of sight. 'I'm not much used to fashionable ways; but it looks good, so I'll just take a bite at it.'

'Aha!' he cried, at the first mouthful. 'What, in the name of goodness, is this? Whoever made the pie didn't stone the plums. It's a golden sovereign! Two, three, four, five sovereigns in my pie! Hurrah! hurrah! for Miss Farleigh Morton!'

'And yours, Susan?' anxiously asked Trimmell, through whose mind a glimpse of hope was darting.

'Ten sovereigns!' said Susan, in astonishment; 'and you know, Henry, what is mine is yours.'

'And yours, mother?'

'The same. Exactly ten.'

'All of no use,' he sighed. 'Twas kindly meant; but 'tis not enough.'

'Look and see what your own contains.'

'Put all together, and it's useless. Twice five-and-twenty is not enough.'

Susan pushed Trimmell's pie towards him. He opened it carefully, and found therein a small circular silver box. Lifting the lid, he took from it a folded paper. As he read it, the blood rushed to his face, and he staggered as if under a blow.

'Look, Susan! Read it! can it be true? I'll go and show it to Mr. Saunders at once.'

With a bounding step and a beating heart, he hastened back across the common. He found the steward quietly admiring the arch, and almost regretting that so tasty a structure should be so ephemeral and so useless. At the sight of the paper fluttering in the wind, Mr. Saunders inquired, 'Your bill for this job? Very well; there can be no

objection to that. Give it me, and you can have the money to-morrow.'

'Oh, no, sir. Not my bill!'

'What's this?' he said, holding it at arm's length, and recognizing the handwriting. 'How did you come by it?'

'Honestly, sir; in this silver box, which Miss Curtis left at my house just now. Read it aloud, sir, if you please, that I may be quite sure it is not a dream.'

'It is no dream,' said the steward, after a pause—'make your mind easy about that. Let us see:—

"Madderley Park.

"Dec. 22nd, 184-.

"To Mr. John Elijah Saunders, steward of the Madderley Park Estate:

"DEAR SIR,

"Be pleased to pay off the mortgage or mortgages on Trim-

nell's Seven Acres; and debit my private account with the same.

"Tell him that if at any future time he wants money on his land, I hope he will give us the preference over the other party.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Faithfully yours,

"ANGELICA FARLEIGH MORTON."

'It is quite correct,' Mr. Saunders went on, folding the paper and returning it. 'Rather an expensive freak, although she can well afford it. You are a lucky fellow, Trimnell; and I wish you joy heartily, but you had better not show that box about too much; else every yeoman in difficulties will be down upon us. Come to me the day after Christmas, with all your papers and a full statement of your affairs. And recollect, Trimnell, that at the next election there will now be no "Party" in the way to prevent your voting for Miss Morton's candidate.'



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London

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



Drawn by G. H. Thomas.

"She went on into the breakfast-room with the two children clinging to her. She looked at the letter lying beside her plate, and felt all at once, with a great pang of sorrow, and shame, and anger—'I know from whom it comes, and what is in it.'"

See the "Story of Two Valentines."

LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1864.

TOM PROBUS AND HIS VALENTINES:

BEING A ROMANTIC EPISODE FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF
JACK ESSEL, Esquire.



IF any additional and thoroughly selfish reason were wanting among many who have been time to time been advised to deter young gentlemen from entering prematurely into the married state, I believe it would be embodied in the consideration of breakfast. Regarding dinners, I should say a man gained rather than lost by

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matrimony. A youthful bachelor, to dine well at his club, or at home, must dine expensively; while, if he relies on the culinary resources of his landlady in any ordinary way, he will probably have to associate between pink beefsteaks and carbonized chops. The much-roasted joint, and cunning *saute* into which it may be transformed—the